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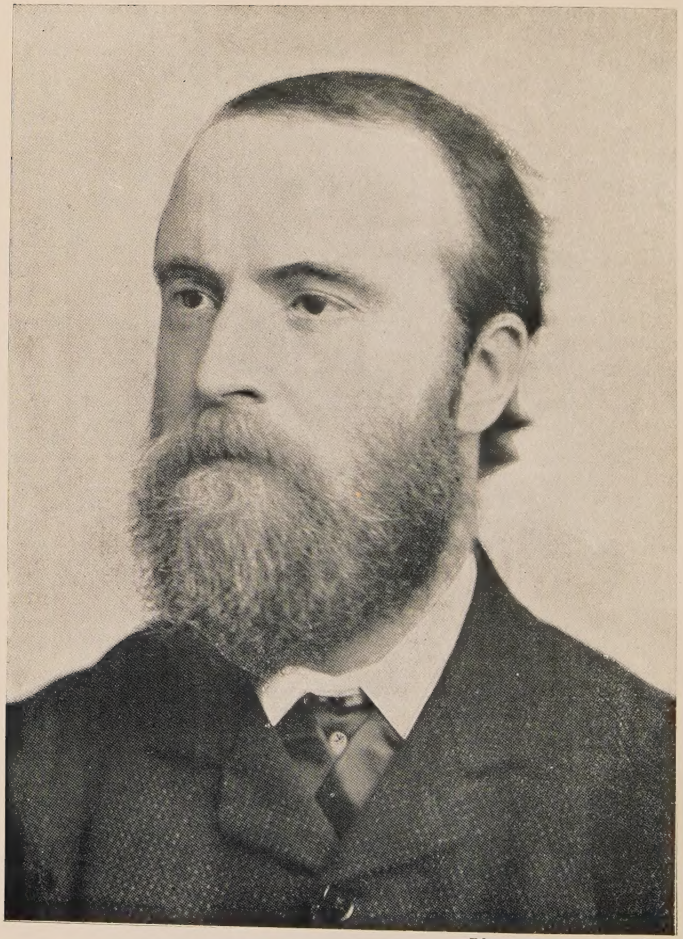

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CHARLES STEWART PARNELL

PARNELL

By ST. JOHN ERVINE

"Judge them not harshly in a love
Whose hold on them was strong;
Sorrow therein they tasted of,
And deeply, and too long."

Merlin's prologue to *The Famous Tragedy of the Queen of Cornwall*, by Thomas Hardy.

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Biography, although we might be pardoned for forgetting it, is the painting of portraits. Such portraits, always of a man, are sometimes also of a place and time ; and since they are pictures, it is, I fear, impossible to paint them without a touch of art. A depressing convention has made us more familiar with the mechanical exercise, which casts a death-mask and calls it a Memoir ; and some inexplicable courtesy continues to multiply those dismal products in which the official biographer vies with the monumental mason. But our own time has seen a welcome revival of the art, as distinct from the industry, of biography ; and it is the purpose of the present gallery to bring together a few portraits from competent hands. The subjects have been chosen from the incomparable procession of English public life in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth centuries. One or two are unrecorded ; some have already received memorial treatment ; but of all, I think, our memory would be the better for a portrait in true perspective, painted, as such things should be, from the life, executed in colour, and finding room for an appropriate background.

PHILIP GUEDALLA.

AUTHOR'S NOTE

I AM deeply indebted to Mrs. J. Howard Parnell, the widow of Parnell's elder brother, and to Major Alfred Tudor MacDermott, Parnell's nephew, for help and information freely given to me in writing this book. I owe much to Miss K. E. Younge, of Queen's County; to Mr. Robert Johnston, of Belfast; to Dr. J. S. Crone, Mr. J. R. Fisher, and Mr. G. W. Davis, of London, for assistance of the most varied and valuable character, without which the book could not have been written.

The following is a list of books which have been consulted:

Life of Charles Stewart Parnell. By Thomas Sherlock. (Dublin: T. D. Sullivan. 1880.)

Parnell and the Parnells. By R. Johnston. (London: Simpkin, Marshall and Co. 1888.)

The Parnell Movement. By T. P. O'Connor, M.P. (London: T. Fisher Unwin. 1889.)

Under which Flag? or, Is Parnell to be the Leader of the Irish People? By a "Gutter Sparrow." (Dublin: J. J. Lalor. 1890.)

The Discrowned King of Ireland. By W. T. Stead. (London: "Review of Reviews." 1890.)

Life of Charles Stewart Parnell. By T. P. O'Connor, M.P. (London: Ward, Lock, Bowden and Co. 1891.)

Life of Charles Stewart Parnell. By R. Barry O'Brien. (Two vols. London: Smith, Elder and Co. 1899.)

A Patriot's Mistake. By Emily Monroe Dickinson. (Dublin: Hodges, Figgis and Co. 1905.)

Charles Stewart Parnell. By Katharine O'Shea. (Two vols. London: Cassell and Co. 1914.)

Charles Stewart Parnell. By his brother, John Howard Parnell. (London: Constable and Co. 1916.)

Chief and Tribune: Parnell and Davitt. By M. M. O'Hara. (Dublin: Maunsell and Co. 1919.)

I have also consulted a variety of biographies, which are noted in the text, and many English and Irish newspapers.

I may, perhaps, here intrude a personal note. I began to write this book with a feeling of prejudice against Parnell. I ended it with a feeling of deep affection for him.

CANNES,
1924-1925

Since the first edition of this book was published, several other books on the subject of Parnell, or referring to him, have been published. They are:

What I Have Seen and Heard. By J G. Swift MacNeill. (London: Arrowsmith. 1925.)

Charles Stewart Parnell: The Last Five Years. By Sir Alfred Robbins. (London: Thornton Butterworth. 1926.)

The Parnell of Real Life. By William O'Brien. (London: T. Fisher Unwin, Ltd. 1926.)

The Life of Tim Healy. By Liam O'Flaherty. (London: Jonathan Cape. 1927.)

ST. JOHN ERVINE.

PREFACE TO NEW AND POPULAR EDITION

I

THE unexpected popularity of this book—for opinion was general that a biography of Parnell was unlikely to attract many readers, not only because he was presumed to be forgotten, but because English interest in Irish affairs, as a result of the establishment of the Irish Free State, had notoriously declined—is gratifying to me for many reasons, but chiefly for the fact that it demonstrates what I had maintained, that the memory of Parnell lives, and that the English aversion to everything Irish was ephemeral. The correspondence which I received from my readers abundantly proves that knowledge of Parnell is not only wider than was imagined, but that he is better known to a multitude of people than are some statesmen who might seem to be more eminent in the history of his time. It proves, too, that the ties between Great Britain and Ireland are deeper than "pathriots" imported from the United States would have us believe. The interrelations of these islands are too closely woven from human fibres to be broken by political considerations, and one of my convictions is that when another time of trial comes to them the people of Ireland and the people of Great Britain will be found firmly allied to each other. My political faith is a matter of no importance, but I here proclaim myself to be a Unionist who believes in the union of the North and the South of Ireland under one Irish parliament in the communion of the commonwealth of free nations which is called the British Empire. That, it seems to me, is the state of affairs for which Parnell worked.

The publication of a new and cheaper edition of my book has enabled me to make some alterations and corrections in the text, and it is my duty to thank all those readers who added to my information or corrected my errors. I gladly do so even in those instances where, anonymously, the information or correction was accompanied by abuse. Perhaps the most pleasing result to me of this book's publication is

the fact that many aged Fenians thanked me for writing it. One very old Fenian, now dead, wrote to me from the North of England to say that one of the few hopes he had retained after a long and disappointed life was that someone might write about his dead Chief as I had done. He had almost lost that hope when my book appeared, and he gave me an old man's gratitude for it. I tell that story, not for my own pleasure, but because it proves what a hold Parnell had upon the memory and affection of those who served him. This extraordinary man made a mark on his country that remains deep and will not soon be removed. He might have died only yesterday, judging by the affection for him expressed to me by many correspondents.

My purpose in adding this preface to the book is chiefly to reply to a criticism[1] passed upon it by Mr. William O'Brien —formerly a Nationalist member of Parliament, but now living in honourable retirement in Mallow—and to comment upon the singular disparagement of Gladstone which is currently fashionable. It is common, even among intelligent people, to assert that Gladstone was guilty of hypocrisy because of his attitude towards Parnell after the divorce suit. The hypocrisy, apparently, lay in the fact that he knew of the relationship between Mrs. O'Shea and Parnell long before Captain O'Shea brought his suit for divorce. Mrs. Parnell in her book[2] made the charge, which has many times been repeated by persons who had not her emotional excuse for making it.

But in what respect was Gladstone guilty of hypocrisy? His references to the divorce suit were perfectly proper. He used no expressions of horror. Mr. O'Brien, indeed, insists that he was reluctant to use any expressions at all about it. He neither wrote nor said, in public or in private, anything that was not worthy of him or of Parnell, nor was there anything in his attitude towards Parnell as a politician which was indefensible. "What!" he exclaimed to Sir William Harcourt, who had urged him to condemn Parnell for immorality. "Because a man is what is called leader of a party, does that constitute him a judge and accuser of faith and morals? I

[1] *The Parnell of Real Life*, by William O'Brien. London: T. Fisher Unwin, Ltd.

[2] *Charles Stewart Parnell*, by Katherine O'Shea.

will not accept it. It would make life intolerable."[1] The belittlement of Gladstone has surely been carried to a childish degree when attempts are made to fix upon him the odious charge of hypocrisy for conduct which was such as anyone in his situation must have followed. It is, I feel, foolish to suggest, as has been suggested, that he was ignorant of the fact that Mrs. O'Shea was Parnell's mistress. Even a man of his unique innocence and simplicity of mind must have known that Mrs. O'Shea was something more to Parnell than a mere courier and despatch-bearer. If he had not guessed the fact for himself, Sir William Harcourt, at least, would have informed him of it ! Her relationship to Parnell, however, was none of Gladstone's business, provided that it remained private and without public result on public affairs, and he very properly refused to let it influence him in his negotiations with her lover. The business of government would be rendered impossible if statesmen paused to assure themselves of the unimpeachable probity of all those with whom they have to deal. What a piece of folly it would have been had Gladstone declined to receive Mrs. O'Shea when she brought messages to him from Parnell, because she and Parnell had committed adultery ! He knew as well as anyone that a public man has to associate with people with whom, as a private person, he would not associate at all, and that he is frequently obliged to ignore facts which he would not ordinarily ignore. Two of Gladstone's colleagues, the Marquis of Hartington and John Morley, were living in dubious relationship with ladies who, subsequently, became their wives. Gladstone must have known of these relationships, but he made no comment upon them, nor did he take any action on them: they had no public consequences upon his policy. It will not be contended, even by those malignant persons who are unwilling to believe any good of Gladstone, that he would have condoned in Hartington or Morley behaviour, had it been made public, which he was not prepared to condone in Parnell.

Those who assert that a man's private affairs, even when they are published in the courts, should not be used as evidence against him in his public career may be left to discuss

[1] *Recollections,* by Viscount Morley, O.M., vol. i.

the subject with those who insist that a man who is false in his private relations will probably be false in his relations with the public. Neither of these contentions has any bearing on the plain facts of the situation in which Gladstone found himself. Those facts are (*a*) that in the England of that time (and probably of to-day) a politician who was cited as a co-respondent in a divorce suit would not be permitted by public opinion to occupy office; and (*b*) that Gladstone—who at the age of eighty-one had undertaken the biggest political fight of his lifetime, and in undertaking it had lost the valuable support of some of his ablest colleagues—saw his whole policy put into grave jeopardy by the romantic irregularities of the very man in whose cause he was fighting, and from whom he had the greatest right to expect support. I am unable to understand the code of those persons who maintain that this old man behaved hypocritically because he preferred the salvage of his Home Rule Bill to the retention of Parnell's leadership, or that his attitude, after the divorce suit and the threatened revolt in the Liberal Party, should have remained exactly as it was before Captain O'Shea called Parnell into the courts. There is no responsible man anywhere in the world who, impaled on the horns of this dilemma, would not have freed himself from it in exactly the same way that Gladstone did. Parnell would not have hesitated for five seconds over his decision: anyone who had imperilled his policy as he had imperilled Gladstone's would have been instantly and, perhaps, brutally punished. There is no need to pursue this matter further. Whatever may be said of the conduct of other persons in this affair, this must be said of Gladstone's, that throughout the whole sorry business it was honourable and such as any man sensitive about his reputation for sincerity and upright behaviour might wish to follow.

II

Mr. William O'Brien's criticism of my book is of a different and more serious sort. He begins by finding fault with the assertion, made in the preface to the first edition, that "I began to write this book with a feeling of prejudice against Parnell," but "ended it with a feeling of deep affection for him." That strictly true statement becomes in Mr. O'Brien's

mind a confession that " Mr. St. John Ervine sat down to write his drama, as he naïvely confesses, ready to write him [Parnell] down a hero or a villain." This odd charge was also made by some Irish-Australian critics, who found me in fault for it. I am unable to understand why an author who acknowledges that his study of the facts of a life compelled him to abandon his prejudices against it thereby reveals himself to be, if not actually a reprobate, at least a person of simple intelligence; and I am as little impressed by the reproach as I am by the assertion, several times made, that I am unfitted to write about Parnell because I never saw him. I was not eight years old when Parnell died, but what of that? It is, no doubt, an advantage to a biographer to have had personal acquaintance with the subject of his biography, but Mr. O'Brien and my Irish-Australian critics will scarcely contend that it is essential. If it were, some remarkable biographies would never have been written; for example, Lord Charnwood's *Abraham Lincoln*, Mr. Lytton Strachey's *Queen Victoria*, and Sir Edward Cook's *Life of Florence Nightingale*. There must have been many authors whose acquaintance with Dr. Johnson was of longer duration than Boswell's. There would be no *Life* of Shakespeare at all if we had to depend for biographies on the writing of persons familiarly acquainted with the subjects of them.

Mr. O'Brien accuses me of making a mystery-man of Parnell, a " play-actor," " the hero of transpontine tragedy." He denies that Parnell had eccentricities greater than those of any normal person, and rebukes me for disclosing the mental distress which afflicted his family. He asserts that the divorce suit is a " nauseous adventure " from which the " Irish people have long agreed to avert their eyes," the implication being, perhaps, that I am serving the purposes of pornography in mentioning it at all. He adds that, had Sir Frank Lockwood allowed Parnell to go into the witness-box and give evidence in his own defence, the result of O'Shea's suit would have been entirely different. Finally, he declares that the villain of the piece was " honest " John Morley, who practically betrayed his Irish friends by persuading Gladstone to publish in the *Pall Mall Gazette* the famous letter which is quoted in Chapter X, Section III of this book.

That Mr. O'Brien's points may be made in his own words, I will presently quote, with his permission, a letter which he wrote to me in reply to a request I made for information concerning the statement which he attributes to Sir Frank Lockwood, that "Parnell was cruelly wronged all round. There is a great reaction in England in his favour. I am not altogether without remorse myself." Mr. O'Brien omits in his book to state what was the evidence which Parnell could have given in the divorce suit that would have ended it in his favour, and it was to enquire what this evidence might be that I wrote to him. He replied to my enquiry with a courtesy which makes me wish that he had not been banished from Great Britain and Ireland in 1890. His beneficent influence might then have been exercised on his colleagues and his countrymen to their and our advantage. I wish first, however, to clear myself of the charge of sensation and salacity-mongering by asserting my belief that it is impossible to account for Parnell's abnormal behaviour, unless one insists upon the persistent eccentricity of mind, amounting in some instances to lunacy, which characterised his family in several generations. Mr. O'Brien, after repudiating my account of Parnell's peculiar habits, amply confirms it by a lengthy description, in the seventh chapter of his book, of a meeting which took place between them in Greenwich Park, when Parnell's manner was as odd as anything that I report of him. The Irish people may avert their eyes from the "nauseous adventure" of the divorce suit, but no biographer of Parnell can avert his. As well might an historian avert his eyes from the "nauseous adventure" of the European War of 1914–1918, which wrecked Europe, as a biographer avert his from the suit which wrecked the Irish Party, prevented the passage, perhaps, of the Home Rule Bill, and involved Great Britain and Ireland in consequences that are incalculable. It is idle, no doubt, to speculate on what would have happened had there not been a divorce suit, but is it wrong for a biographer to attach importance to an event which made Parnell a frustrate man, and caused dissensions in Ireland that are still unresolved nearly forty years after his death?

III

The following is the text of Mr. O'Brien's letter to me:

MALLOW.
October 22nd, 1927.

DEAR SIR,

Sir Frank Lockwood was doubtless restrained by professional etiquette from going into particulars with me as to why he felt remorse for not allowing the O'Shea divorce action to be defended. His scruples are sufficiently explained by an extract from an affidavit sworn and filed by Mrs. O'Shea herself, which was published in the *New York Times* of September 21st, 1911:

"The Petitioner (O'Shea) constantly connived at and was accessory to the said alleged adultery, by inducing, directing and requiring the Respondent (Mrs. O'Shea) to form the acquaintance of the Co-Respondent (Parnell), to see him alone in the interest and for the advancement of the Petitioner; by directing the respondent to invite the Co-Respondent to her house in the absence of the Petitioner, in the latter's interest and advantage, both before and after he had accused her of adultery with the Co-Respondent; by his knowledge that the Co-Respondent was constantly in the house of the Respondent, in the Petitioner's absence; and by leaving the Co-Respondent alone at Wonersh Lodge with the Respondent, when the Petitioner left for London or for the Continent."

Why the lady subsequently changed her mind and decided not to support her sworn statement at the trial and through her counsel prevailed upon Parnell to act upon her decision I do not know; but nobody acquainted with the English law as to condonation can doubt that if she and Parnell had entered the witness-box there was an end of the Divorce proceedings. Parnell's own belief was that, if the Petitioner was made aware that he would have to face the evidence of his wife and of Parnell, the action would never have been brought to trial. This is what he meant and I understood him to mean by the passage in his letter to me in which he wrote: "If this case is ever fully gone into (*a matter which is exceedingly doubtful*) you may rest assured that it will be shown that the dishonour and the discredit have not been on my side."

I have a strong aversion to joining in public controversy about the private sin of the great Irishman. In the case of any other Irishman the offence would have meant instant and undiscussable

expulsion from public life—so much for the public morals side of the case—but in my judgment, then and now, would not in itself have justified Ireland in the destruction of a man who was at that moment as indispensable to his nation as was Nelson to Britain on the eve of the Battle of Trafalgar.

Will you allow me to suggest that you would be doing a much finer service to humanism if you would turn your talents to the exposure of what was in reality the predominant element of the Parnell tragedy, although it has heretofore been carefully hidden away from the knowledge of the public—I suppose through a tenderness, not perhaps so well justified, for another great man. I mean what may not be too gravely designated as the Morley tragedy—the confession in Lord Morley's *Recollections* of the story which he had suppressed in his *Life of Gladstone* fifteen years before, and which makes him more responsible than any other man for the split in the Irish Party, the cleavage between Parnell and Gladstone, and the subsequent annihilation of both the Irish Party and the Liberal Party, with perhaps other disastrous consequences for the two countries which have yet to follow.

That, you may say, is another story. It is, in my poor judgment, the true story and the essence of the true story why the Divorce Court led to Committee Room 15 and to the mutual destruction of Parnell's Party and of Gladstone's Party, not upon any exalted moral issue, but in dire and calculated ignorance concerning the real attitude of Gladstone, and of the majority of his Cabinet and in obedience to the intrigue of those two curious allies, Morley and Harcourt, who, in panic or hypocrisy—call it which you will—put themselves at the head of a handful of fanatic and roguish politicians at the Sheffield Liberal Federation meeting, and sealed the fate both of the Irish and the Liberal leaders and of their Parties. You have only, I think, to examine the evidence of Morley's two books with care to come to the conclusion that the electioneering calculation on which this wrong to the two countries was founded was even as gross a blunder as it was a shabby crime, and that the results of the General Election might have been very different if the British Democracy had been faced with an honest revelation of the truth and the whole truth.

Faithfully yours,
(*Signed*) WILLIAM O'BRIEN.

ST. JOHN ERVINE, ESQ.

IV

Mr. O'Brien's letter adds little, if anything, to our information. The defence in the divorce suit, in my judgment, was abandoned for a sufficiently good reason. Parnell passionately loved Mrs. O'Shea, who passionately loved him. Had the charge of connivance at his wife's adultery been successfully preferred against Captain O'Shea, the divorce suit would, as Mr. O'Brien says, have been lost, but with it would have been lost Parnell's opportunity of marrying Mrs. O'Shea. There was only one advantage to be gained in charging O'Shea with condonation, that public exposure of Parnell's relationship with Mrs. O'Shea might be averted through terrorising O'Shea. When it became apparent that O'Shea was not to be terrorised by the threat of this charge, and that, whatever end there might be to his suit, the fact of Parnell's habitual adultery with Mrs. O'Shea would be clearly and publicly established and his political career endangered, then he and she, now certain only of their love for each other, had to consider what they could save from the wreckage. They could save only the opportunity of marriage. In the passage from Parnell's letter to Mr. O'Brien which Mr. O'Brien quotes in his letter to me, it is clear that, even before the case came into court, Parnell feared that O'Shea was not to be frightened by the counter-charges proposed to be made against him. Nothing, in fact, would have been established by the defence that was not firmly believed by many persons without its establishment—namely, that O'Shea connived at the seduction of his wife by Parnell. Parnell's enemies would not, perhaps, have been able to indulge in so much eloquence about the break-up of a happy home by a licentious friend, because it would have been proved that there was no happy home to break up and that the marriage of the O'Sheas had for years been a miserable one. But that fact, too, was known to many persons at the time of the divorce, and I greatly doubt if it would have deterred Parnell's enemies from appealing to the emotions of the electorate on the ground that the sanctity of marriage and the ties of friendship had been outraged. The moral obliquity of Parnell, in the eyes of those persons who

hold divorce in abhorrence, would not have been reduced by this knowledge: it might, on the contrary, have been increased; for there is something disgusting to every person, however tolerant he may profess to be, in the thought of a man seducing a woman with the knowledge and connivance of her husband. Dr. Spence Watson, who threatened at Sheffield to lead a revolt in the Liberal Party if Parnell were not repudiated by Gladstone and removed from the leadership of their party by the Irish Nationalists, was unlikely to have his mind altered by the information that Captain O'Shea had practically promoted his wife's debauch. Adultery, in Dr. Watson's opinion, was adultery, whether it was condoned or not condoned. Mr. O'Brien surely allows his indignation to render him unjust when he ascribes not only fanaticism, but roguery, to the members of the Sheffield Liberal Federation, who, abhorring adultery and sincerely fearful of the effects of the divorce suit on the strength of their party, delivered an ultimatum to their leaders that Parnell must go. He cannot have it both ways—that the ultimatum was both stupid and shabby. Either the revolters were sincere in their detestation of the adultery and their fear of its effects upon the policy of their party, which, presumably, was important to them—in which case they may have been stupid, but certainly were not shabby; or they were insincere—in which case they were shabby, though not necessarily stupid. Which will Mr. O'Brien have them to be? I am not among those who hold John Morley in veneration. He was narrow-minded, excessively vain, entirely unimaginative, and an extremely tedious person who, both as a politician and an author, was overvalued. If anyone buried Gladstone, Morley did. I fail, however, to find in his behaviour over the letter to the *Pall Mall Gazette* that shameful guilt which is found in it by Mr. O'Brien. His duty was primarily to Gladstone, not to Parnell, and to the Liberal Party, not to the Irish Nationalists. He had been present at some of the meetings in Sheffield, and was aware of the strength of Dr. Watson's feelings, and of his power over the delegates. Gladstone, whose instinct was to treat Parnell with chivalry, was not aware of the bitterness and strength of that feeling, and Morley and Harcourt had to convince him of the serious-

ness of the situation. Both of them clearly felt that not only the Home Rule Bill, but the life of the Liberal Government and perhaps of the Liberal Party, were in jeopardy, and that danger could only be averted by the repudiation of Parnell in firm and unmistakable terms. Was that wrong of them? They may have been stupid in estimating the strength of the revolt so highly as they did, although there is no evidence to prove that they were stupid; but in what respect were they shabbily criminal? The incident which seems to Mr. O'Brien to prove that Morley acted in a villainous manner, when he persuaded Gladstone to insert in his letter to the *Pall Mall Gazette* the omitted statement that, if Parnell continued to be leader of the Irish, Gladstone's leadership of the Liberal Party would be rendered "almost a nullity," does not warrant him in holding that belief. Morley believed—this seems to me to be indisputable—that if Parnell remained in authority over his party Gladstone would lose *his* authority over the Liberals, and the whole programme of his party, including Home Rule for Ireland, might be lost. His duty, therefore, was to strive as best he could to avert that danger by inducing Parnell to resign from his authority. When he found that the "almost a nullity" sentence was omitted from the draft of the *Pall Mall Gazette* letter, he exclaimed to Gladstone, "But you have not put in the very thing that would be most likely to move him." Harcourt and he agreed that only the strongest statement was likely to influence Parnell. They, therefore, urged their chief to make his statement as strong as possible. I can see nothing mean or knavish in that. Morley may have been panic-stricken—he probably and not unwarrantably was—but he was not corrupt. I take it that Mr. O'Brien, in his attempts to secure self-government for his country, was prepared to exercise his influence to the uttermost in order to prevent his attempts from becoming abortive. He would deeply and justly resent an accusation of treachery and criminality for having done so.

Mr. O'Brien's arguments, even if they were sound, that Morley played the villain in this business do not affect my argument that the Irish Nationalists, having formally proclaimed their allegiance to Parnell at the Leinster Hall in Dublin on November 20, 1890, should not have allowed

themselves to fall into a panic and to betray that allegiance five days later at Westminster. I do not propose here to rehearse the arguments set forth in the tenth chapter of this book. It is enough if I repeat the undeniable fact that a majority of Parnell's followers, who had solemnly sworn to support him, not only deserted him at the first hint of trouble, but vilely stabbed him as they ran. Mr. O'Brien was not among the Seceders. He can proudly say that his hands were not imbrued in his Chief's blood. There is nobility in his attempt to deliver the Seceders from the shame into which they fell when they fled from their only Chief; but the attempt fails: the shame remains.

ST. J. E.

131, WHITEHALL COURT,
LONDON, S.W. 1.
November 9, 1927.

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PARNELL

CHAPTER I

HIS FAMILY

I

About the year 1863, a tall, intense, and handsome girl, with dark hair and hazel eyes, used occasionally to walk, heavily veiled, from her mother's town house at 14, Upper Temple Street, Dublin, to an office near to Dublin Castle, where a Fenian newspaper, founded in that year by John O'Leary, was published. Her serious manner and studious looks were surprisingly accompanied by a witty tongue, for it is not common for a woman to be both witty in her speech and serious in her behaviour, but she showed none of her wit when she entered the office of the *Irish People*. As a rule she made these visits to newspaper offices alone—she afterwards contributed poems and articles to the *Nation* and the *Irishman*—but sometimes her elder brother, a tall, lanky, stammering, handsome youth of nineteen, went with her. They would enter the editor's office, where the girl would place a manuscript, generally of a poem, in the editor's hands, and then, as silently and as unobtrusively as they had entered, she and her brother would withdraw. The poems and articles were signed "Aleria," and they had a finer quality than is commonly to be found in poems full of political passion. Had she been less engaged in argument and controversy and patriotic propaganda, she would probably have become a distinguished writer; but she belonged to a country which has always turned its poets into politicians, and she was governed by a mother who made her diversion from poetry to politics unavoidable. Her name was Fanny Parnell, and her age was fourteen. Her brother, John Howard Parnell,

vaguely sympathised with her views on the government of Ireland, but her second brother, to whom she was devoted, and by whom she was deeply loved, neither sympathised with her views nor would he ever accompany her on her missions to the Fenian papers. When she shyly showed him her poems, he laughed at her.

Ireland, at that time, was full of Fenians from America. These men had fought in the Civil War, and, remembering their nationality, decided to declare war on England, so that they might set Ireland free. Some of them made an abortive raid into Canada; others enlisted in Irish regiments quartered in Ireland and tried to convert their comrades to sedition (in which they were so successful that the alarmed authorities transferred the troops to England and to India); others took part in dynamite conspiracies to blow up the Houses of Parliament and public buildings in England; and some were merely spongers on the movement. These last, for the most part, and a few that were honest, discovered that Mrs. Parnell would open her purse and home to them, and it soon became common for a procession of dishevelled men, professing the highest patriotism and the most noble sentiments, to call at 14, Upper Temple Street for nourishment and money. The sight was obnoxious to the authorities, who noted in their dossiers the singular fact that a lady of the land-owning class was toying with treason; but it was still more obnoxious to the lady's second son, Charles Stewart Parnell, a young militia officer, who bluntly asserted that the patriots were tramps. His disgust with them was such that he used to lie in wait for them behind the hall door, and, directly it was open, make a rush for them and kick them down the steps.[1] His dislike of the Fenians was as strong as his sister's affection for them, and since his temper was quick and fierce and sometimes uncontrollable, he caused dismay among

[1] *Charles Stewart Parnell*, by his brother, John Howard Parnell, p. 70.

the patriots who thronged about his mother's door. This house was so divided against itself that the Fenians had to be careful how they approached it in search of sustenance and charity.

Matters went on in this bickering way until the authorities, thoroughly frightened, decided to suppress the Fenian papers and arrest the editors. The *Irish People* and the *Irishman* were raided and put down. John O'Leary, Thomas Clarke Luby, Charles Kickham, and O'Donovan Rossa were tried for treason and sent to penal servitude for twenty years. That was in the year 1865. Fanny Parnell, feeling that she, too, if she had her rights, would be in the dock by O'Donovan Rossa's side, attended every day at his trial, with her elder brother, and was so moved by his courageous demeanour that she persuaded John to buy a bouquet of flowers which they purposed to throw to him in court. But the majesty of the law overawed them, and the flowers withered in their hands. The authorities, having disposed of the major culprits, now prepared to teach a lesson to the minor ones. Mrs. Parnell had not only encouraged suspicious characters to assemble at her house for food and money, despite the efforts of her second son to kick them from it, but had even enabled a Fenian named John Murphy, who was involved in a dynamite outrage in Manchester, to escape in female clothing to America. The police obtained a search warrant, and entered her house, which they ransacked from cellar to attic. They found militia uniforms belonging to John Howard, who was in the Armagh Light Infantry, and Charles, who was in the Wicklow Rifles, and—such is the intelligence of the police—mistook them for Fenian regimentals, and carried them away! There was a scene of anger when Charles discovered that his uniform and sword had been seized in the belief that they were emblems of sedition, and he darkly murmured that he would one day give the police something better to do than turning his sister

into the street.[1] This was Fanny, who, scorning the enemies of her country, refused to stay under the same roof with them, and abruptly departed for Hood's Hotel, in Great Brunswick Street.

When his rage had abated, he began to tease his mother, and to warn her that her Fenian sympathies might yet bring her into grave trouble; but it was apparent that the feeling of anger remained, despite his teasing, and it was revived when, a short time after the seizure, an invitation to a levée at the Castle came from the Viceroy, Lord Carlisle, who was a close personal friend of Mrs. Parnell. The young militia officers were eager to attend the levée, but, alas! their uniforms were possessed by the police. The fact that they were treated as Fenian uniforms seemed extraordinarily to irritate Charles, who was proud of his commission in the Queen's army, and resented being regarded as a Fenian. "This preyed upon his mind," says his brother John,[2] "and he finally declared that he would leave the house if anything more was said about the Fenians." It will seem a trifling matter for a man to brood upon, but when one realises what the temper of the time was, and the class to which Charles Parnell belonged, the matter becomes less trifling than it now seems. Moreover, he had a proud and sensitive nature, and he could not easily endure the chaff from his brother officers in the Wicklow Rifles which he was ready enough to scatter over his mother.

II

Fanny Parnell's poems, wherever they appeared, were identical in tone: they sounded a loud note of love for Ireland and a louder note of hatred for England. She scourged her countrymen with her pen, incessantly urging them to re-

[1] *Life of Charles Stewart Parnell*, by R. Barry O'Brien, vol. i., p. 47.
[2] *Charles Stewart Parnell*, by John Howard Parnell.

member their manhood and to prepare themselves for whatsoever hardship they might have to endure in the deliverance of their country. " The birds of prey," she wrote:

The birds of prey are hovering round, the vultures wheel and swoop—
They come, the coroneted ghouls, with drum-beat and with troop—
They come to fatten on your flesh, your children's and your wives';
Ye die but once—hold fast your lands, and if you can, your lives.

And when she had done with these descriptions of her own relations, she turned to the Irish and made her appeals to them in terms which were not innocent of contempt:

Oh, by the God who made us all—the seignor and the serf,
Rise up ! and swear this day to hold your own green Irish turf;
Rise up ! and plant your feet as men where now you crawl as slaves,
And make your harvest-fields your camps, or make of them your graves.

The verses she was writing for the *Irish People* were not so accomplished as those, but they were equally fiery, and they were meat and drink to the Fenians, who printed them with pride and pleasure. If she were writing like this in her green youth, what would she be writing in her maturity ! The small knowledge they had of her must have stimulated their minds, for she was an aristocrat and a member of a wealthy, land-owning family with an honourable record in Irish affairs. If a sense of humour had been a Southern Irish possession, the Fenians might have found cause for ironic comment in the spectacle of this girl describing a considerable number of her relatives as " coroneted ghouls," but since a sense of humour has been denied by heaven to the Southern Irish, they thought only of the singular fact that not once, but many times, in the history of Ireland had a leader of rebels against England come from the families of the Ascendancy, and they may have entertained their thoughts with the dream that this young girl would fearlessly follow in the footsteps of Lord Edward Fitzgerald. The

founders of the *Irish People* and the majority of its readers desired to sever the connection between England and Ireland. They dreamt of an Irish Republic, and were so intent on its establishment that they would not willingly listen to anyone who suggested that some ameliorative work of an immediately necessary sort should be done. They had as much contempt for reforms effected through the agency of the English Parliament as a Marxian Socialist has for palliatives. Give the slum-dweller a better house, says the Marxian, and he will refuse to fight for the dictatorship of the proletariat. He will become contented. Therefore, let him fester in his slum until he can endure it no longer, and rises up and slays some very rich person. Give the farmer better conditions of tenure, said the Fenian, and he will become so reconciled to his lot that he will refuse to fight for the establishment of a free and independent republic in Ireland! . . . Such are the arguments of the logical and the fatuous. A republic or nothing was the demand made by the Fenians. All else must wait until that supreme demand had been satisfied; and so they declined to engage in the promotion of laws to lighten the load under which the farmer staggered towards a livelihood.

No one can properly appreciate the present state of Ireland who does not know its history between the years 1845 and 1865. This is not the place in which to set it out, but the reader will do well to remember that he cannot begin to understand many contemporary events of an appalling character until he has made himself acquainted with the history of those twenty years. It is told, with a wealth of detail, in Mr. T. P. O'Connor's invaluable book, *The Parnell Movement*, the first half of which should be made a compulsory subject of study for every Englishman engaged in public affairs. A Conservative ceases to be a Conservative and becomes a public danger when he puts a passion for personal

advantage in place of a passion for public service, and forgets that his first duty is, not the conserving of himself and his class, but the conserving of the community. Almost the whole of the Conservatives of Ireland were especially engaged during those twenty years in the grossest form of self-preservation, that which will not cease from any cruelty which will bring immediate profit; and we are entitled to say that our forefathers, who shamefully misused their power in those twenty years, are directly chargeable with all the miseries and misfortunes, the barbarities and sickening atrocities, which, since then, have made Ireland notorious among nations.

The record which Mr. O'Connor sets out in his book makes terrible reading. Less than eighty years separate us from that time, yet it seems such misrule and tyranny could only have happened in the Dark Ages. In twenty-one years, 1849–1870, nearly two and a half millions of people fled from Ireland to America and Australia, of whom seventy-five per cent. were between the ages of fifteen and thirty-five. In seven months of the year 1863, 80,000 persons, mostly young men and women with strong limbs and stout hearts, left Ireland probably for ever, leaving behind them the ailing, the weak, and the aged. And they took with them bitter memories of suffering and wrong that have raised almost insuperable barriers for English welfare in many parts of the world. Thousands of men and women, of all ages, were evicted from their homes at a moment's notice in the interests of a theory of political economy.

Nassau Senior was the apostle of pastures and fat beeves and muttons, and his statistical soul rejoiced as the records of emigration grew. There was more joy in his heart over one bullock than over thirty men, and he sighed for the day when he might journey through the country and see herds of cattle and hardly a man. Ireland was then, and probably

still is, over-populated. It is a small island, sixty miles shorter than one of the great lakes (Michigan) of America, and large tracts of its surface are occupied by mountains, bogs, and water; but between the years 1785 and 1845 its population rose from 2,845,932 to 8,295,061, most of the increase taking place *after* the Union. This great increase of people was a misfortune, for, as Professor Alison Phillips states in the first chapter of *The Revolution of Ireland*, " the dampness and uncertainty of the climate, while producing magnificent pasture, make the growing of cereal crops a precarious undertaking over large parts of the island." If men had been bullocks or sheep, without passions or attachments, the principles advocated by Nassau Senior might have been practised swiftly and without hardship; but men are not bullocks, though they sometimes seem to be sheep, and it is undeniable that Irish landlords, greedy for large and quick returns for their money, performed acts of gross and unbelievable barbarity in turning tillage into pasture. The evicted farmer, as he watched the roof being removed from his cabin, had no knowledge which enabled him to share in the rejoicing of Nassau Senior: he had only the peasant's hungry love of his home. These men, unskilled in books and economical arguments, remembered in America what they had seen in Ireland, and there grew from their loins a race of people, American bred, who had heard from their infancy of an Ireland, reputed to be flowing with milk and honey, from which their parents were brutally ejected by savage and rapacious Englishmen. It was the descendants of these evicted men and women who made the times of terror forty and eighty years later. In 1846 the Great Hunger occurred. Famines have been frequent in Ireland before that year and since, but this was the worst of them all. People died by the roadside or starved in their cabins. They ate grass; they devoured seaweed; they gnawed the very earth.

There was even a horrible rumour that a demented woman had eaten her dead child ! . . . In that most terrible year, when the soul of Ireland was seared, Charles Stewart Parnell was born.

One would hardly have expected to find support for the Fenians in a family which would certainly have suffered financial embarrassment if the Fenians had had their way, unless one were aware of the fact that the Celtic Irish found their leaders less often among themselves than among the Anglo-Irish. Their distrust of each other made them reluctant to accept a commander from their own ranks, and their instinctive love of aristocracy compelled them to look for a leader in the high ranks above them. Michael Davitt, unmistakably a Gael and an Irishman, who had suffered terribly for his country, said with bitterness unusual in him, " The Irish would never accept me as a leader because I belong to the ranks of the people."[1]

But perhaps a profounder reason accounts for the fact that the Irish in their struggles against the English have almost always found their leaders in the camps of their enemies. The ability to lead is not commonly found among the Celtic Irish, who have, however, an ability to follow and to endure and suffer which is unmatchable. " The Celt knows his need," said Mr. J. L. Garvin in a brilliant criticism of Mr. Barry O'Brien's biography. " He is rebellious to symbolic title. He never acknowledged succession through minors and women. He craves for actual discipline and a real dictator. The only political institution of the Celt is the chief. Mr. John Hill Burton observes it in his *History of Scotland*. Mr. Bodley maintains it in his book on France. Mr. Barry O'Brien proves it in his *Life of Charles*

[1] *Chief and Tribune: Parnell and Davitt*, by M. M. O'Hara, p. 224.

Stewart Parnell."[1] One may be pardoned for wondering whether the Irish Celtic civilisation could have survived by itself when one observes how strained and attenuated it has become. One fact beyond all dispute emerges from the clouds of controversy which hang about the Irish firmament, and that is that the whole of what is commonly called Irish culture to-day is Anglo-Irish culture. The great names which illuminate the pages of Irish history for seven centuries past are Anglo-Irish and Scoto-Irish names. This fact is especially observable in literature. Berkeley, Swift, Goldsmith, Sheridan, Burke, Wilde, Moore, Shaw, Synge, Yeats, Russell, James Stephens, Lennox Robinson, definitely and undeniably belong to these groups. In rebellious politics, as we have seen, the Anglo- and Scoto-Irish outnumbered the Celtic Irish among the leaders. It is only in journalism that the Celtic Irish achieve distinction, for journalism is primarily a matter of gossip, and the Celtic Irish talk well.

It has sometimes been observed, not without astonishment, that Englishmen who settle in Ireland become more Irish than the Irish themselves, and a wonder has filled the minds of many persons at the spectacle of men and women of undoubted English origin manifesting a fierce and uncontrollable hatred against England, and making themselves busy and prominent among her enemies. John Mitchel, the author of the *Jail Journal*, could not have hated England more if he had not had a drop of English blood in his body. Dean Swift, although he had no very great affection for Ireland, had less, if he had any at all, for England. John Millington Synge, who, like Parnell, was descended from a Cheshire family, professed an inability to live with any content among the English. Parnell himself, for the greater part of his

[1] *Parnell and his Power*, by J. L. Garvin, *Fortnightly Review*, December, 1898.

mature life, showed a hatred for England which was almost a mania. Many of the leaders of the Sinn Fein rising in 1916 were of English origin, while the more extreme of their successors, those who seceded from the Free State to the Irregular or Republican section of Sinn Fein, were almost all English in origin or English in themselves. The irreconcilable enemies of England in Ireland have rarely had Irish blood. The Parnells had no Irish blood at all. Their pedigree shows no record of intermarriage with the " native " Irish. They married, as did most of their class, within the ranks of the Anglo-Irish or among their kinsmen in England. The Anglo-Irish, in short, formed a compact and distinct group in Ireland, as easily distinguishable in feature and fortune and behaviour from the " Irish " Irish as a Provençal is from an Alsatian.

It has been said, but without warrant, that the " Irish," whatever that expression may mean, have always absorbed their conquerors, but the assertion is false so far as the Anglo-Irish are concerned. Differences of class, of religion, of social habit, of culture, and of condition made any such absorption difficult, if not actually impossible. There is always intermarriage to some extent, even in countries where the differences cited are increased by the difference of colour, but there was far less intermarriage in Ireland than is commonly and sentimentally believed. The Anglo-Irish generally married among the Anglo-Irish; the Celtic Irish generally married among the Celtic Irish; and so it happened that two groups of people grew up in Ireland who were definitely divisible from each other in nearly every respect. The Parnells had married among the Howards (the family name of the Earls of Wicklow), and the Brookes (the Irish branch of an old Cheshire family), and the Wards of County Down, and the Whitsheds, none of whom was Irish in any sense pleasing to a devout member of the Gaelic League.

Mr. J. R. Fisher, in an interval from his labours on the Boundary Commission, kindly prepared for me some genealogical notes, taken from the *Hamilton Manuscripts*, which show that Charles Stewart Parnell, the present Marquis of Dufferin and Ava, and the present Viscount Bangor are all ninth in descent from Hans Hamilton (a descendant of the Dukes of Hamilton), who was minister of Dunlop in Ayrshire. The minister's son, James, came over to Dublin, as confidential agent of James VI. of Scotland, to make sure of his becoming James I. of England and Ireland. Through this descent, Parnell was remotely related to Robert Emmet, and could claim kinship with a host of lords—Carrick, Roden, Claremont, Clanbrassil, Limerick, and others.

On their mother's side, the young Parnells were descended from an Ulster-Scottish family which had emigrated from Belfast to Philadelphia during a time of persecution in the middle of the eighteenth century, taking with them a sense of wrong and injustice which rankled in their minds and filled them with a hatred of England which was transmitted to their descendants, becoming more bitter and ferocious as it became more academic and remote from personal fact, until at last it became a madness in the mind of Delia Tudor Stewart, who met and married John Henry Parnell in 1834. Many thousands of Ulster Presbyterians fled to America between the years 1728 and 1770, and these were among the stoutest and most determined of those who fought against the English in 1775 and won the War of Independence.

Miss Stewart's father, Commodore Charles Stewart, of the American Navy, was a famous and remarkable man, who performed many daring and audacious feats in various wars fought by the United States, particularly those against England. He had a genius in seafaring which enabled him to attack and defeat enemies as brave as himself, even when they were superior to him in numbers. He was the first

American to bear the title of "Admiral," but it was by one more affectionate, that of "Old Ironsides," that he was known to the majority of his countrymen. Mr. Barry O'Brien quotes this description of him: "Commodore Stewart was about five feet nine inches, and of a dignified and engaging presence. His complexion was fair, his hair chestnut, eyes blue, large, penetrating, and intelligent. The cast of his countenance was Roman, bold, strong, and commanding, and his head finely formed. His command of his passions was truly surprising, and under the most irritating circumstances his oldest seamen never saw a ray of anger flash from his eyes. His kindness, benevolence, and humanity were proverbial; but his sense of justice and the requisitions of duty were as unbending as fate. In the moment of great stress and danger he was cool and quick in judgment, as he was utterly ignorant of fear. His mind was acute and powerful, grasping the greatest or smallest subjects with the intuitive mastery of genius." His wife, a beautiful Boston woman, and the daughter of Judge William Tudor, who fought against the English in the War of Independence, ultimately refused to live with him for what his granddaughter calls "domestic reasons."[2] These reasons are not described in any detail, but as "an illegitimate relation," after the death of "Old Ironsides," instituted a lawsuit[3] against Mrs. Parnell, on the plea that her property really belonged to him, "in spite of his bar-sinister," we may conclude what they were. At all events, when the old Admiral offered to adopt Emily Parnell, after she had been disinherited by her father, her uncle, Mr. Wigram, a member of the sect of Plymouth Brethren, with which the Parnells had several associations, paid the sum necessary to get her made a ward in Chancery

[1] *Life of Charles Stewart Parnell*, by R. Barry O'Brien, vol. i., p. 28.
[2] *A Patriot's Mistake*, by Emily Monroe Dickinson, p. 10.
[3] *Idem*, p. 210.

rather than permit her to "live in such a questionable atmosphere."[1]

Accounts of a man's ancestry have become unfashionable in modern biography, but we cannot safely dispense with an account of the Parnells' pedigree, since we find in it much that enables us to comprehend the character and conduct of Charles Stewart Parnell. The swiftness of judgment and grasp of detail which were notable in Parnell, exciting the admiration and wonder of his contemporaries, were clearly inherited from "Old Ironsides," and perhaps also his susceptibility to the love of women. One sees in the eyes of Parnell's mother a strong, lustful look, and we may believe that Parnell's highly sexual nature was derived by him from the distaff side. Admiral Stewart died in his house on a high bluff of the Delaware, south of Black's Creek, at Bordenstown, New Jersey, on November 6, 1869. We are given no account of the relations between him and his Irish grandchildren, nor do we know whether he ever saw any of them, except John; but his blood unmistakably flowed through the veins of one of them, and "Old Ironsides," had he lived long enough, might have seen himself renewed in his grandson, Charles.

III

We begin to discover the sources from which some of the young Parnells drew their singular antipathy to England. The immediate and main source of it, as shall presently be shown, was Mrs. Parnell, but there were other sources which went to augment the swollen stream which poured from her. It is unnecessary, and perhaps impossible, to describe all of them; but one, which affected them as much through their mother as through their father, has to do with the peculiar nature of the English people, who are so restive under any

[1] *A Patriot's Mistake*, by Emily Monroe Dickinson, p. 37.

authority than that of themselves that, when they quit their country, they will not tolerate the tyranny, however benevolent it may be, of even their own kin who remain at home. It was mostly men of English and Ulster origin who made the Revolution which separated England and America; and some of the most bitter and narrow-minded Anglophobes in the United States can say that they have no other blood than English. The late Henry Cabot Lodge misspent a long life in obstinate antagonism to England because he had inherited a hatred of it so fierce and fanatical that, when he was a young man, merely to read a newspaper account of a fight between two pugilists, Sayers and Heenan, was sufficient to fill him with rage against a people and a country of which at that time he had no personal knowledge. Yet Henry Cabot Lodge sprang from an English family. It has been remarked that Canada remains within the British Commonwealth of nations because most of its English-speaking pioneers were clan-loving Scotsmen, while America broke away from England because most of its English-speaking pioneers were Englishmen. The English settlers in Ireland soon displayed the English characteristic of rebellion against home authority, with the result that nearly all the anti-British movements in Ireland for seven centuries past have been led by men of English origin. The Parnells had been in Ireland for less than two centuries when Delia Stewart began to bear children to John Henry Parnell, but in that time they had given more than their share of able and eminent men to the ranks of those who were prepared to defend Ireland against the assaults of England.

The first of the Parnells of whom we have accurate knowledge was Thomas, a mercer and draper in the town of Congleton in Cheshire. He was a substantial citizen, and became mayor of his town in the reign of James I. His son, Richard, also became mayor of Congleton on three separate occasions. His

fourth son, Tobias, who was a gilder and decorative painter, became the father of Thomas Parnell, the third known to us of that name, who founded the Irish family. This Parnell purchased an estate in Queen's County after the restoration of the Stuarts to the English throne, probably because his Cromwellian activities had rendered him obnoxious to the restored monarchy, and he rightly imagined that life would be more comfortable at a distance from the Royalists. He had inherited his family's thrift and industry, and soon became a prosperous Irish land-owner. When he died in 1685 he left two sons—Thomas, a clergyman, and John, a lawyer. Thomas, who is better known as a poet than as a priest, was the first of the Parnells to be born in Ireland. His birth took place in Dublin in 1669, and he was educated at Trinity College. In 1703 he was ordained, and two years later was appointed, his age being twenty-seven, to the archdeaconry of Clogher. This rapid preferment to archidiaconal rank, however, was due less to devotion or doctrinal distinction than to family influence, for his heart was in literature and not in theology. In those days there was more nepotism than godliness in the Church of Ireland, and young men of family were frequently to be found in possession of handsome revenues from a cure of souls in which the souls were far to seek. Dean Swift himself at Laracor one morning began his sermon, not with "Dearly beloved brethren," but with "Dearly beloved Roger," for Roger, his parish clerk, was the sole person present to hear him.

Archdeacon Parnell was oftener in London than was consistent with the proper discharge of his light duties in the diocese of Clogher, and, when there, was more frequently seen in the society of wits and poets than of clerics. It is probable that the only Dean he gladly endured was Swift, who, like Alexander Pope, was especially his friend. He must have had considerable personal charm, for at a time when

political feeling ran high he contrived to be on terms of intimate friendship with both Whigs and Tories, and could count on the affection of Swift, Addison, Steele, Congreve, Pope, and Gay. Yet he was moody, either in a state of elation or of depression: "the most capable man," wrote Oliver Goldsmith in his *Life*, "to make the happiness of those whom he conversed with, and the least able to secure his own." His wife, a beautiful and amiable lady, died when he was thirty-two years of age, and thereafter a melancholia settled upon him, and he became mentally disordered. He suddenly died at Chester in 1717, when on his way from London to Ireland, and was buried there, in his thirty-eighth year, having been predeceased by his two sons. Thus perished the first of the Irish Parnells.

"His work," says a writer in the *Dictionary of National Biography*, "is marked by sweetness, refined sensibility, musical and fluent versification, and high moral tone."[1] His *Life of Homer* was prefixed to Pope's translation of the Iliad, and Pope was indebted to him for much assistance in his own work, a debt which he discharged by editing an edition of his poems. Dr. Johnson discreetly, perhaps reluctantly, praised him, saying, "He is sprightly without effort, and always delights, though he never ravishes." "It is impossible to say whether they [his poems] are the productions of nature so excellent as not to want the help of art, or of art so refined as to resemble nature." The poet's property in Queen's County, as well as some that he had in England, now passed into the possession of his brother, John, the lawyer, who had settled at Rathleague in Queen's County. He was "a man of great integrity and most amiable character," and though he achieved no personal distinction, he was the

[1] A volume of his poems, entitled "Poems by Thomas Parnell, selected by Lennox Robinson," was published by the Cuala Press, 133, Lower Baggot Street, Dublin, in 1927.

progenitor of several distinguished men, to whom he did the important service of leaving his fortunes in better condition than they were when he received them.

The Parnells, as has already been hinted, had more notabilities among them than are common in one family. Between the Cecil who was Queen Elizabeth's counsellor and the Cecil who, as Marquis of Salisbury, became Prime Minister of England under Queen Victoria there stretches a long list of totally undistinguished persons; but between the Parnell who was mayor of Congleton and the Parnell who became "the uncrowned King of Ireland" there are at least three notable names, the first belonging to the poet. The second distinguished Parnell was Sir John, the second baronet, who was Chancellor of the Exchequer in the Irish Parliament in 1787—a brave and honourable man who, in a time when nepotism was accounted almost a virtue and a sign of parental solicitude, resolutely refrained from using his public power for the betterment of his family. He resisted the dissolution of the Irish Parliament and the Union with England, and was dismissed from his high office and accused of treason by Castlereagh. The fight he fought was a lost fight before it began, but he came out of it with an unshakable reputation for just and fair dealing. He is described as a man of "blunt honesty, a strong, discriminating mind, and good talents." He died in 1801, leaving five sons and one daughter, of whom the eldest, John Augustus, was a deaf and dumb imbecile.[1] Because of this son's afflictions, a special Act of Parliament was passed in 1789 to enable Sir John's second son, Henry, to succeed to his father's property and title. Henry was, perhaps, the most generally distinguished of all the Parnells, though he was to be outdone in particular distinction by his grand-nephew. He became Secretary of State for

[1] John Augustus, Henry, William, Thomas, Arthur, and Sophia. The last named became Mrs. Evans. See pp. 33, 42 and 77.

War in Lord Grey's Ministry, but was dismissed from his office because he was not amenable to authority. In 1835 he became Paymaster-General of the Forces in the Melbourne Ministry, and kept his office until he was made a peer under the title of Lord Congleton in 1841. He did not long survive his ennoblement. He lost his health, and hanged himself at the age of sixty-six on June 8, 1842, in his house at Cadogan Place, Chelsea.

Lord Congleton was a very able and astute man, ready, like his father, to defend Ireland whenever it was assailed. He might, indeed, have enjoyed longer spells of higher office had he been more accommodating in the matter of misusing Catholics, but he persisted in protecting them whenever he could, and for that cause was unpopular with his colleagues, to whom the defence of unimportant and powerless people was probably a sign of perversity and sheer silliness. He had a high reputation as a political economist and writer on finance. "Among the projects he advocated in the British House of Commons were the abolition of all laws restricting either labour or capital, including the abolition of the Corn Laws, which made the food of the people dear; the removal of all unequal taxes, and the substitution of a property tax; the shortening of the term for which members of Parliament are elected, so that constituencies could sooner deal with those who misrepresent them; an extension of the franchise; the introduction of the ballot for the protection of voters from intimidation; and the abolition of flogging in the army and navy, and of impressment in the latter."[1] In a treatise entitled *Financial Reform*, he laid before his countrymen the financial and fiscal policy which was later on to be carried out by Sir Robert Peel and Mr. Gladstone. One of his books, *A History of the Penal Laws against the Irish Catholics from* 1689 *to the Union*, is considered to be the best on its

[1] *The Life of Charles Stewart Parnell, M.P.*, by Thomas Sherlock, p. 11.

subject. An account of him,[1] quoted by Mr. Barry O'Brien from one of his contemporaries, is interesting because of some points of resemblance it contains between him and his grand-nephew, Charles Stewart Parnell:

"Sir Henry Parnell is a respectable, but by no means a superior speaker. He has a fine clear voice, but he never varies the key in which he commences. He is, however, audible in all parts of the House. His utterance is well timed, and he appears to speak with great ease. He delivers his speeches in much the same way as if he were repeating some pieces of writing he had committed to his memory in his schoolboy years. His gesticulation is a great deal too tame for his speeches to produce any effect. He stands stock still except when he occasionally raises and lets fall his right hand. . . ."

He was, as Mr. O'Brien points out, an opponent of the use of the lash nearly half a century before Charles Parnell took a powerful part in the agitation against flogging in the services. One may compare this account of Lord Congleton with that of his grand-nephew, given by his brother: "He was always afraid of lapsing into an error of grammar or spelling, and for a considerable time wrote out his speeches word for word, and carefully corrected them before delivery."[2]

"When speaking in public he stood up rather stiffly, with his arms folded loosely in front of him, though very occasionally I have seen him with them clasped behind his back. . . . He spoke in a rather low voice, but slowly and very distinctly, making every word tell. He rarely emphasised any point, however important, by raising his voice or by gesticulating in any way with his arms. As a matter of fact, he always had a horror, even in private life, of speaking loudly. I remember an instance of this one time when we were together at Avondale. We were walking down the road to the saw-

[1] This and the other accounts of the Parnells are taken from *The Life of Charles Stewart Parnell*, by R. Barry O'Brien, vol. i., pp. 1-20

[2] *Charles Stewart Parnell*, by John Howard Parnell, p. 53.

mills, when I noticed that some of his men working on a field near-by were taking things very easily, even for Irish labourers. I said to him: 'Why don't you call out to those fellows, Charley, and get them to hurry up? They look like being all day over that field, if they go on like that.' He replied, with a shrug of his shoulders: 'I know that; but if I wanted to make them hear I should have to shout, and I dislike shouting.' "[1]

We may here note that the melancholia which haunted the whole of the Parnells, ranged in Lord Congleton's generation from imbecility in the eldest son, through madness, terminating in suicide, in the second son, to extreme eccentricity in the fourth son, Thomas, who was familiarly known in Dublin as "old Tom Parnell," and marked oddity in their sister, Sophia, who married a member of Parliament called George Hampden Evans. "Old Tom Parnell," says Miss Frances Power Cobbe:[2]

"'Old Tom Parnell' . . . had a huge, ungainly figure like Dr. Johnson's, and one of the sweetest, softest faces ever worn by mortal man. He had, at some remote and long-forgotten period, been seized with a fervent and self-denying religious enthusiasm of the ultra-Protestant type; and this had somehow given birth in his brain to a scheme for arranging texts of the Bible in a mysterious order which, when completed, should afford infallible answers to every question of the human mind! To construct the interminable tables required for this wonderful plan, poor Tom Parnell devoted his life and fortune. For years, which must have amounted to many decades, he laboured at the work in a bare, gloomy, dusty room in what was called a 'Protestant office' in Sackville Street. Money went speedily to clerks and printers; and no doubt the good man (who himself lived, as he used to say laughingly, on a 'second-hand bone') gave money also freely in alms. One way or another, Mr. Parnell grew poorer and more poor, his coat looked shabbier, and his beautiful long white hair more obviously in need of a barber. Once or

[1] *Charles Stewart Parnell*, by John Howard Parnell, p. 175.

[2] *The Life of Frances Power Cobbe*, by herself, vol. i., p. 191.

twice every summer he was prevailed upon by his sister [Mrs. Evans] to tear himself from his work and pay her a few weeks' visit in the country at Portrane; and to her and to all her visitors he preached incessantly his monotonous appeal: 'Repent; and cease to eat good dinners, and devote yourselves to compiling texts!' . . . At last one day, late in the autumnal twilight, the porter, whose duty it was to shut up the office, entered the room and found the old man sitting quietly in his chair where he had laboured so long . . . fallen into the last long sleep . . ."

with his texts still incompletely arranged and the solution of all the questions that vex the human mind undiscovered. We shall have occasion to refer to Mrs. Evans in the second chapter, but we may here note that Lord Congleton's heir, the second peer, carried on the Parnell tendency to eccentric behaviour by leading the Plymouth Brethren in Ireland, and that Charles Stewart Parnell himself was for a short period attracted by the dismal doctrines of that singular society of Christians. "I like their quietness," he said to Mr. T. P. O'Connor.

The third of Sir John Parnell's sons was William, the grandfather of Charles Stewart Parnell.[1] He was the first of his family to live at Avondale, which had been settled on Sir John by one of his friends and admirers, Colonel Samuel Hayes, a barrister-at-law. "The will of Colonel Hayes contained a curious provision that the estate of Avondale should always pass to a younger member of the family (it being considered, no doubt, that the older members would be sufficiently provided for out of the ancestral estates in the counties of Armagh and Queen's); and it also stipulated that the owners of Avondale should take the name of Hayes, or Parnell-Hayes. My grandfather was known as William Parnell-Hayes, but the name Hayes has for some reason been

[1] Arthur, of whom we have no other information, was the youngest.

dropped by the subsequent heirs of the property."[1] William Parnell-Hayes lived the life of a quiet, studious, country gentleman, interested mainly in his books, his neighbours, and his estate, and took no active part in politics, although he was an enemy of the Union and sufficiently interested in public affairs to publish in 1805 a pamphlet entitled *An Enquiry into the Causes of Popular Discontent*, in which he displayed deep sympathy with the persecuted Papists. He also published a book entitled *An Historical Apology for the Irish Catholics*, in which this sympathy was manifested at greater length. The Parnells had always been known for their defence of the misused Catholics, and it was the reputation of his ancestors in this respect which secured friendly consideration for Charles Stewart Parnell when, seemingly a stuttering, stupid young man, he offered himself to the Nationalists as a political candidate. William Parnell-Hayes, despite his affection for his life at Avondale, was persuaded to enter Parliament as member for Wicklow in 1817, but he did not long remain there, for he died on January 2, 1821, in his forty-fourth year, leaving a ten-year-old son, John Henry, and a daughter, Catherine. Avondale now became the property of the latter, who had married a Mr. Wigram.

John Henry Parnell, since he was not the owner of Avondale, did not retain the surname of Hayes, and no provision had been made for its adoption by a female heir on her marriage. The " Hayes," therefore, was dropped. John Henry, now owner of Collure in Armagh and Clonmore in Carlow, decided, after the death of his father, to go on a long tour in America and Mexico with his cousin, Lord Powerscourt. He, like his father, was more ambitious to lead the life of a country gentleman than to lead the life of a politician, and his tastes, too, were literary. He was not yet twenty-one when Powers-

[1] See Appendix G, p. 302, *Charles Stewart Parnell*, by John Howard Parnell.

court and he set off on their travels. Soon after they arrived in America they met in Washington Miss Delia Tudor Stewart, a tall, handsome, vivacious girl of seventeen, with dark hair and blue eyes, an unusually oval face and pale complexion, who talked politics to them, and was conspicuous in the social and public life of her neighbourhood. Each of them fell in love with her, and it seemed as if the superior social position of Lord Powerscourt would enable him to win her from young Parnell. But the latter's sister, Mrs. Wigram, hearing of the affair, determined to help her brother, and she gave him Avondale in return for a mortgage of £10,000 bearing interest at five per cent.[1] This gift seems to have settled Lord Powerscourt's chances, and in 1834 she married his cousin in New York. "This," says Mr. Barry O'Brien, "was the one notable event in the life of John Henry Parnell." He was twenty-one and she was barely eighteen when he took her to Avondale.

IV

The Parnells had always offered resistance to English misgovernment of Ireland, but they had never hated England. They remained on terms of friendship and even of intimacy with their kinsmen in the larger island. Much of their time was spent in England. They sent their children to English schools and universities. They regarded themselves as the English in Ireland, and, although they would not permit, if they could help it, the English to bully or tyrannise over them, they yet considered themselves important members of the English family. When one of them was raised to the peerage he took, as we have seen, his territorial title, not from Ireland, but from Congleton, the town in Cheshire where

[1] *Charles Stewart Parnell,* by his brother, John Howard Parnell, Appendix G, p. 302.

his family was founded. But with the advent of Miss Delia Tudor Stewart to Avondale, as the new Mrs. Parnell, a change began. This lady, who seems to have been one of those outspoken, strong-minded, silly women, commoner now, perhaps, in America than anywhere else, who have been so admirably exposed by Mr. Bernard Shaw in the characters of Mrs. Clandon in *You Never Can Tell* and Lady Britomart Undershaft in *Major Barbara*, set herself, almost from the beginning of her life at Avondale, to the mean mischief of making bitterness and wrath between her husband's family and their countrymen in England. She is not the only American woman who, having married into an Anglo-Irish family, has wrought incalculable harm to her adopted country and people by importing into it an entirely artificial hatred of England, founded on the fact that the English English and the American English fought against each other more than a century ago with much of the bitterness which is commonly to be found in family feuds. The legend is that the American English were entirely virtuous on that occasion, while the English English were entirely villainous, but verity obliges us to believe that there were faults on both sides. Mrs. Parnell had no doubts on the matter: the English English were miscreants of an unusually foul sort, while the American English were possessed of a nobility which placed them a little higher than the angels. Her husband, an easy-going man, endeavoured, but without success, to make a reasonable woman of her, but it seems that he soon despaired of doing so, for there came a time when he absolutely forbade political discussions. "At Avondale politics were tabooed."[1]

The death of her husband in 1859, at the age of forty-eight, removed all restraint from her, and she soon began to take part in extreme politics. She hated England and the English with a ferocity so outrageous as to leave us wondering whether

[1] *Life of Charles Stewart Parnell*, by R. Barry O'Brien, vol. i., p. 43.

or not the poor lady was right in her head. Whenever she met an Englishman, in her own house or in his, she took advantage of her sex to insult his country and his race. Her guests, remembering that she was their hostess, though she rarely remembered that fact herself, good-temperedly laughed at her tirades, although some of them must at times have thought that she passed beyond the bounds of decency and decorum. She retained, oddly enough, a strong affection for the English throne. "Our mother," says her son, John Howard Parnell, "though American to the core, a burning enthusiast in the cause of Irish liberty, and possessed of an inveterate hatred of England . . . yet always instilled into her children the principles of personal loyalty to their Sovereign, which she held not to be inconsistent with individual liberty." He quotes an extract from a letter which she wrote to him while he was a member of Parliament, "containing an exhortation which she must often have addressed to Charley as well during his lifetime:"

"How the Queen must despise low, mean, mischief-making extremists! They get money by rousing passions and exaggerating aims. If they succeed, rebellion and anarchy will run riot in Europe. . . . The Queen is wise and good; find out her intentions. Her ministers are not infallible."[1]

She urged her son to attend the levées and Court functions, and was, when she lived in Dublin, herself assiduous in attending at the Viceregal Court. Lord Carlisle, the Viceroy, was her personal friend, and had given instructions to his officials that she and her children were to be included in the list of guests to be invited to all the functions either at the Lodge or the Castle. One who knew the Parnells and

[1] *Charles Stewart Parnell*, by his brother, John Howard Parnell, p. 128.

Avondale tells me that Mrs. Parnell was considered by the people about the estate to be a "flighty" woman. They said that her husband "was a clever man, but drifted along, and allowed his wife to manage everything about their children. She was 'bad all along, and mad in the end.' She would go away and not see her husband for near a year again." Mr. Barry O'Brien, her son's biographer, met her in 1896, two years before she died of burns at Avondale. She was then about eighty years of age, and "animated by one fixed idea, a rooted hatred of England; or rather, as she herself put it, of 'English dominion.'" When Mr. O'Brien enquired of her why her son had such an antipathy to England, she replied, "Why should he not? Have not his ancestors always been opposed to England? My grandfather Tudor fought against the English in the War of Independence. My father fought against the English in the year 1812, and I suppose the Parnells had no great love for them. . . . It was very natural for Charles to dislike the English; but it is not the English whom we dislike, or whom he disliked. We have no objection to the English people; we object to the English dominion. We would not have it in America. Why should they have it in Ireland? Why are the English so jealous of outside interference in their affairs, and why are they always trying to dip their fingers in everybody's pie? The English are hated in America for their grasping policy; they are hated everywhere for their arrogance, greed, cant, and hypocrisy. No country must have national rights or national aspirations but England. That is the English creed. Well, other people don't see it; and the English are astonished. They want us all to think they are so goody-goody. They are simply thieves."[1]

It is difficult to understand how Mrs. Parnell managed to distinguish, in her hatred, between the policy of these fright-

[1] *Life of Charles Stewart Parnell*, by R. Barry O'Brien, vol. i., p. 29.

ful people and the people themselves. A man who is a greedy, arrogant, canting, hypocritical thief must surely be as hateful as are greed, arrogance, cant, hypocrisy, and theft? One might excuse and forgive this incoherent, contradictory, and fatuous stuff if it were merely the utterance of an aged lady, somewhat deranged[1] and on the verge of death, but it is typical of the sort of stuff she had been accustomed to talk wherever she went in England or in Ireland from the day she arrived at Avondale. One who was at Chipping Norton, where her sons, John and Charles, were at school, states in a passage quoted by Mr. O'Brien[2] that he well remembered "the day the Parnells came to school" for the first time. "Their mother brought them. She wore a green dress"—a colour which her son Charles had not yet discovered to be unlucky—"and Wishaw came to me and said, 'I say, D——, I have met one of the most extraordinary women I have ever seen—the mother of the Parnells. She is a regular rebel. I have never heard such treason in my life. Without a note of warning she opened fire on the British Government, and, by Jove, she gave it us hot. I have asked her to come for a drive to show her the country, and you must come too for protection.'" When Lord Carlisle dined at her house or she dined at the Viceregal Lodge, for she loved the assemblies of the rich and influential, she lashed him with her tongue, but he appears to have treated her unseemly talk as the bibble-babble of a pretty young woman whose passion for disrupting conversation must be indulged by elderly gentlemen. Officers visiting Avondale to play cricket, a game of which both her husband and her son Charles were fond, were

[1] She had been violently assaulted on the head in America by a man with a grievance against her a short while before Mr. O'Brien met her. See *A Patriot's Mistake*, by her daughter, Mrs. Emily Monroe Dickinson, p. 204 *et seq.*

[2] *Life of Charles Stewart Parnell*, by R. Barry O'Brien, vol. i., p. 29.

generally treated to a piece of her mind on a subject which seemed never to be off her tongue. Those who suffered from this abuse seldom believed that she was in earnest. That was the age—as, indeed, this is too—when a woman could be as abusive and ill-bred as she pleased provided she had first taken the precaution to be good-looking. It was only pretty Fanny's way. But Mrs. Parnell's mania was no laughing matter, and when her husband was no longer alive to control her, she contrived to raise a horrid crop of hatred in the minds of her younger children; for it is significant that those of them who manifested this hatred were all under the age of fourteen when their father suddenly expired in the Shelbourne Hotel in Dublin. Charles Stewart was thirteen, Fanny was ten, and Anna was seven years of age in the year of his death, 1859.

These three, especially Fanny, were more successfully trained by her to hate England and the English than their brothers and sisters. The resentment which Charles as a young man felt against his mother because of her association with the Fenians was not due to affection for England, but to pure snobbery. The Fenians were common people, unkempt and poor, and Parnell did not care to mix with persons of no social distinction. This snobbery lasted with him for the length of his life. When he went to America for the first time, at the age of twenty-five, he was " greatly afraid of being mistaken for the usual Irish emigrant, the only class of our countrymen to be found in these parts, and before we went round to Colonel Powell he said to me: ' For God's sake, John, don't tell him we are from Ireland, as they have never seen a real Irish gentleman, and wouldn't know one if they did. . . .' "[1] When John Parnell suggested to him one day that he should enter Parliament, he curtly replied, " ' I could not, because I would not join that set.' His pride,

[1] *Charles Stewart Parnell*, by his brother, John Howard Parnell, p. 91.

in other words, prevented him from moving with the Home Rulers of that time, because they were beneath him in station."[1] His mother shared his feelings in these matters, for she wrote to her son John, after her son Charles's downfall: "Your brother is the only gentleman in the whole set—so high-principled, so strictly delicate and correct-minded."[2]

Miss Frances Power Cobbe, in her *Life* from which quotation has already been made, has the following passage:

> "Mrs. Evans, *née* Sophia Parnell . . . and a great-aunt of Charles Stewart Parnell . . . often spoke to me of the Avondale branch of her family, and more than once said: 'There is mischief brewing! I am troubled at what is going on in Avondale. My nephew's wife' (the American lady, Delia Stewart) 'has a hatred of England, and is educating my nephew, like a little Hannibal, to hate it too!'"[3]

The octogenarian Mrs. Parnell, when she tried to account to Mr. O'Brien for her son's singular antipathy to the race from which he had sprung, omitted to inform him that she had deliberately misshaped her son's mind, and had reared him and his brothers and sisters in a rage which could not end otherwise than in the ruin of those whom it racked. Her daughter Fanny, while still a young girl, was composing poems of which this mania was the motive. Her son Charles, although he was English even to his accent, professed and felt a personal hatred for England and the English people which seriously affected his political relations with them and prevented him from attempting to understand them or to make them understand him or his countrymen. He would not willingly associate with them on any other terms than those of enmity, and he forbade his subordinates in Parliament

[1] *Charles Stewart Parnell*, by his brother, John Howard Parnell, p. 131.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 132.
[3] *The Life of Frances Power Cobbe*, by herself, vol. i., p. 186.

to do so.[1] He was devoted to his mother, despite the insinuations made towards the end of his life that he had treated her shabbily, and he was responsive to her suggestions. The seeds of antipathy which she sowed in his mind did not spring up at once, but when they did spring up they became unrootable. He always "distrusted" the English, and reviled them as hypocrites. They were "wolves," dishonest, self-seeking, full of machiavellian plots, treacherous. He would not deign to "explain" himself to them, and was with difficulty persuaded by Justin McCarthy and Michael Davitt to pay for propaganda in England to educate the English electorate in the meaning of the Irish movement. Once, while delivering an address before a Convention in Dublin, he suddenly dropped his theme and threw off some of his anti-English sentiments. "The great thing, in my opinion," he said in a passage containing more venom than sense, "is to resolve that we shall use no articles of English manufacture whatever. Buy in any other market that you please if you cannot buy in any Irish market, and there are undoubtedly many things which are not provided well in Ireland or which are not produced at all in Ireland. These things we ought to buy anywhere but in England. . . ." He paused for a moment, and then repeated the last words, "anywhere but in England."[2]

Dean Swift, during a period of mental disturbance, said this more wittily, though not any more sensibly, when he advised the Irish people to burn everything from England except coal. The voice was the voice of Parnell, but the words came straight from the mind of his mother. They

[1] On one occasion, Mr. T. M. Healy, now Governor-General of the Irish Free State, asked for permission to dine with Mr. Joseph Chamberlain, and was angrily refused. See *Life*, by R. Barry O'Brien, vol. ii., p. 45.

[2] *Chief and Tribune : Parnell and Davitt*, by M. M. O'Hara, p. 181.

could not have come from the mind of a statesman. Mr. R. B. Cunninghame Graham, as aristocratic as Parnell and as unhappy as he in the House of Commons, had some friendship with him. Writing in a defunct Irish review called *Dana*, he said of Parnell that, "above all, he hated England and her ways. With what a seething coldness, as of ice upon the edges of a crater, he would say 'your country' or 'your queen.' Even the House of Commons, stupid as it was, would shiver, and red-faced Tory squires and Nonconformists, reared on seed-cake and lemonade, would rise in their seats, shaking their mottled or their plebeian fists at his calm, smiling face. . . . No one, I think, was ever hated by the House as was Parnell, and he returned its hate a hundredfold, taking delight in gibing at it and making it absurd. Nothing offended him so much as when some hypocritical 'Noncon.,' whom he and Gladstone had kicked round into Home Rule, would talk about the 'union of our hearts,' and prophesy that soon all differences of race would be obliterated. Then, as he ground his teeth and his pale cheeks grew white with rage, he sometimes muttered, 'Damn them!' with so much unction and such fervency that one felt sure his prayer, if not immediately vouchsafed, would yet be taken *ad avizandum*, as the lawyers say, and perhaps be of avail."[1] Mr. Cunninghame Graham, wishing to praise Parnell, leaves us with the uncomfortable feeling that his hero's mind was unsound, since no human being can hate a race, as Parnell is here reported to have hated England, and remain in possession of his senses. Mr. Graham's casual reference to the foam which gathered about Parnell's mouth when he was in one of his rages adds to the discomfort.

It was in this atmosphere of insane hatreds that the young

[1] From an article entitled *An Tighearna: A Memory of Parnell*, by R. B. Cunninghame Graham, published in *Dana*, November, 1904, p. 193.

Parnells grew up. Charles, whose mentality was slow, took longer than his younger sisters, Fanny and Anna, to produce the fine flowers of Mrs. Parnell's hatred, but when they came they were immense. Fanny's hatred never dwindled; it steadily increased. Her dabblings in spiritualism did not diminish it, and what little we know of her shows that she retained, in all its intensity, her loathing of the English to the day of her death. In 1877, when she was twenty-eight, she sat for twenty-six continuous hours, exalted, no doubt, by the discomfiture of the Saxons, in the Ladies' Gallery while her brother and his followers held up the business of the House of Commons. It was she who founded the American Ladies' Land League, which was the forerunner of the Irish Ladies' Land League, founded by her sister Anna in Dublin, and afterwards ruthlessly suppressed by Parnell when he emerged from Kilmainham Prison.[1] The last glimpse we get of her is through the eyes of the late William Redmond.[2] She and her mother were then living, in 1882, at the house bequeathed to Mrs. Parnell by her father—Ironsides, Bordenstown, near New York. Redmond and Michael Davitt had been conducting an Irish mission in America, and Davitt was about to depart for Ireland. A reception was held in New York in his honour, and Mrs. Parnell read a poem about him which Fanny had composed. Davitt departed, and shortly afterwards Redmond went out

[1] "The work of the suppressed Land League was carried on by the Ladies' Land League under the presidency of Parnell's sister. The ladies, if they did not actually stimulate crime, did little to suppress it. When Parnell eventually emerged from Kilmainham, he was furious with them, both on account of their policy and their extravagance. Outrages had increased, and they had spent £70,000 during the seven months of his incarceration."—*The Life of Henry Labouchere*, by Algar Labouchere Thorold, p. 157.

[2] See footnote on p. 373, vol. i., of *The Life of Charles Stewart Parnell*, by R. Barry O'Brien.

to Ironsides to see the Parnells. Fanny was not at home. "She returned in a great state of excitement with a copy of the *New York Herald* in her hand. It was the time of the Egyptian War, and there was a rumour of an English defeat. I remember well seeing Fanny burst into the drawing-room, waving the paper over her head, and saying: 'Oh, mother, there is an Egyptian victory. Arabi has whipped the Britishers. It is grand.' That was the last time I saw Fanny Parnell alive. Next day, she died quite suddenly." She was found dead in her bed on the morning after Redmond's visit. Like many members of her family, including her father and brother Charles, she suffered from a weak heart, and probably the shock of discovering that Arabi had *not* whipped the Britishers, killed her. She was Charles Parnell's favourite sister and companion, and the news of her death deeply distressed him. When Anna heard of it, she "fell into a fit which very nearly proved fatal."[1]

Fanny Parnell was, perhaps, of all her family, the most fervently devoted to Ireland. Her passion for her country had a quality of fierce virgin affection which was not to be found even in her brother Charles's feeling for it. The best of her poems is one entitled "After Death," in which this affection is abundantly made manifest:

Shall mine eyes behold thy glory, O my country? Shall mine eyes behold thy glory?
Or shall the darkness close around them, ere the sunblaze break at last upon thy story?

When the nations ope for thee their queenly circle, as a sweet new sister hail thee,
Shall these lips be sealed in callous death and silence, that have known but to bewail thee?

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[1] *Charles Stewart Parnell*, by his brother, John Howard Parnell, p. 211.

Shall the ear be deaf that only loved thy praises, when all men their tribute bring thee?
Shall the mouth be clay that sang thee in thy squalor, when all poets' mouths shall sing thee?

Ah! the harpings and the salvos and the shoutings of thy exiled sons returning!
I should hear, tho' dead and mouldered, and the grave-damps should not chill my bosom's burning.

Ah! the tramp of feet victorious! I should hear them 'mid the shamrocks and the mosses,
And my heart should toss within the shroud and quiver as a captive dreamer tosses.

I should turn and rend the cere-clothes round me, giant sinews I should borrow—
Crying "O, my brothers, I have also loved her in her loneliness and sorrow!"

"Let me join with you the jubilant procession: let me chant with you her story;
Then contented I shall go back to the shamrocks, now mine eyes have seen her glory!"

V

It has been necessary to make these plunges backwards and forwards into the history of the Parnells to create for the reader the atmosphere in which the young Parnells grew. They had a distinguished ancestry on their father's side and on their mother's side, but they had inherited from it a physical weakness and a strongly emotional and morbid nature which impelled some of them dangerously near to lunacy. It was their misfortune that their easily-disturbed minds should have been dominated, during their most impressionable years, by a mother who could give them no better purpose in life than to "hate England," and was herself mentally unbalanced.

CHAPTER II

HIS CHILDHOOD AND YOUTH

I

JOHN HENRY and Delia Tudor Parnell had twelve children in nineteen years. One of them, a boy, was stillborn. There is no record of the date of this child's birth, but there is reason to suppose that he was the first of the Parnell babies.[1] It is difficult to prepare an accurate account of these children, chiefly because there were no official records kept of births and deaths in Ireland prior to 1864. Mr. Parnell's dates, in the table given in the first chapter of his *Life* of his brother, are drawn from an admittedly defective memory—he wrote the book when he was seventy-three—and some of them are demonstrably inaccurate. He gives the year of his sister Delia's death as 1881, but we know that her only son, Henry, died in 1882, and that the cause of her death, which occurred in America, was grief at his loss. The year of his sister Sophia's death is inaccurately given as 1875: it should be 1877. Death certificates do not assist the enquirer, probably because the age of the deceased is frequently a matter of conjecture rather than of knowledge. But, correcting Mr. Parnell's dates where this is possible, the following is a short account of the eleven children of Mr. and Mrs. Parnell who were born alive:

WILLIAM TUDOR, born in 1837 and died in 1838.

DELIA, born in 1838 and married on June 11, 1859, in which year her father died, to James Livingston Thomson, an American millionaire. She died in America soon after the death of her only child, Henry, took place in Paris in 1882. He was twenty-one when he died.

[1] Mr. Barry O'Brien seems not to have known of his birth, for he states in the *Life* that Mr. and Mrs. Parnell had eleven children (vol. i., p. 30) but Mr. John Parnell mentions it on p. 11 of his book on his brother.

HAYES, born in 1839 and died, as the result of an accident in the hunting-field, at the age of sixteen, in 1855.

EMILY, born in 1841 and married in 1864 to Captain Arthur Dickinson, by whom she had one daughter, Delia Tudor. This daughter survives. Captain Dickinson died in Brussels, and his widow, some years after his death, married an Englishman, Captain Cuthbert Ricketts. She died in the South Dublin Union Infirmary on May 18, 1918, her age being certified as eighty, but this was probably conjectured.

JOHN HOWARD, born in 1843 and married on June 13, 1907, to Olivia, eldest daughter of Colonel James Smyth and widow of Archibald Mateer. He held the post of City Marshal of Dublin, and died at Sion House, Glenageary, Co. Dublin, on May 3, 1923. He had no children.

SOPHIA KATHERINE, born in 1845 and married at the age of sixteen, in the Scottish fashion, to Alfred MacDermott, a Dublin solicitor. This marriage was never publicly acknowledged, and as Sophia was a ward in Chancery, her husband decided to have a public marriage in Ireland, when she had attained her majority, without letting the Lord Chancellor know of the Scottish ceremony. The second marriage took place on May 22, 1866, in St. George's Church, Dublin. She died at 43, Fitzwilliam Square, Dublin, on February 17, 1877, her age being given as thirty-three. She had four children, of whom three survive.

CHARLES STEWART, born on June 27, 1846, and married on June 25, 1891, to Katharine O'Shea, daughter of the Rev. Sir John Page Wood and divorced wife of Captain William Henry O'Shea. He had three daughters by Mrs. O'Shea while she was still Captain O'Shea's wife. One was born in 1882, and died nine weeks after her birth. The second was born in 1883, and the third in 1884. One of these two married a doctor, and died in childbirth. The other is unmarried, and survives. Charles Stewart Parnell died at 9, Walsingham Terrace, West Brighton, on October 6, 1891, at the age of forty-five. His widow died at 39, East Ham Road, Littlehampton, on February 5, 1921, at the age of

seventy-six. Captain O'Shea died at 19, Lansdowne Place, Hove, on April 22, 1905, at the age of sixty-five. Mrs. O'Shea had three children by him—one son and two daughters. She had six children in all.

FANNY, born in 1849 and died, unmarried, at Ironsides, Bordenstown, New Jersey, on July 20, 1882.

HENRY TUDOR, born in Paris in 1851 and married in 1882 to Penelope Jane, daughter of the Rev. Thomas Luby, D.D., of Trinity College, Dublin. He had two sons and one daughter, all of whom are alive. He died in Lausanne in November, 1915.

ANNA CATHERINE, born in 1852 and drowned at the Tunnel Baths, Ilfracombe, on September 20, 1911. She was unmarried.

THEODOSIA TUDOR STEWART, born in 1853 and married on July 21, 1880, in Paris to Commander Claude Paget, R.N. She died on March 17, 1920, at 38, Denbigh Street, Pimlico, London, her age being certified at sixty-four, which would make the year of her birth 1856. She had one child, a son, who survives.

II

All the Parnell children, with the exception of Henry Tudor, were born at Avondale, in the lovely Avonmore Valley, near the village of Rathdrum, County Wicklow.[1] Trees are not plentiful in Ireland, but they grow abundantly in Avonmore, and some of the finest beech, elm, and silver fir trees in Ireland surrounded the Avondale lawn. A fine avenue of beech-trees lead from the turreted gate-house to the mansion, a squarely-built house planned in 1777 by an architect who

[1] Mr. T. P. O'Connor, in his *Life of Parnell*, states that Mr. Parnell himself told him that he was born at Brighton. There was probably some misunderstanding here. At all events, he was baptised in Rathdrum Parish Church on August 9, 1846, by the Rev. W. Pakenham Walsh, who was afterwards Bishop of Ossory. It is, of course, quite possible that Parnell was born at Brighton—for which he had great liking—but his family have always given his birthplace as Avondale.

had no regard for beauty of design. Avondale, however, stands on a high hill in beautiful country above the River Avon, about two miles from "The Meeting of the Waters," which is celebrated in a popular poem by Thomas Moore:

> There is not in this wide world a valley so sweet
> As that vale in whose bosom the bright waters meet.

The house is entered by a granite porch supported by granite pillars, giving immediately on to a large, high hall, "capacious enough," according to Mrs. Dickinson, "to drive a coach and four round," and "taking up," says her brother, John Howard Parnell, "at least one-third of the whole area" of the house. Huge wood fires generously roared up its chimneys, and in it most of the family life, especially of the children, was spent. There was a carved oak musician's gallery at the upper end of the hall, the railing of which was hung with memorials and relics of the Parnells' ancestors. The walls bore the heads of deer and a variety of religious inscriptions, the colours of the Irish Volunteers, some souvenirs of trips to Canada and other countries, and the antlers of the largest elk in existence. The remains of this elk were found in one of the bogs on the estate. Here, too, was a large billiard-table. Italian ornaments were in this and all the other, rooms of the house. The library, plentifully furnished with books, the dining-room, and the drawing-room were all large, and, since they opened on to each other, could be converted into a single room suitable for the balls and parties in which the Parnells delighted. The drawing-room contained a marble chimney-piece, bearing inlaid inscriptions made by the Italian painter Bossi, and valued, so it was said, at £1,000. In all these rooms, texts from the Scriptures were lavishly displayed. The stables were large and contained many horses, for Mr. Parnell was Master of the Hounds and kept the kennels at Avondale. He was a fairly rich man, the

owner of three estates, and he lived in the extravagant fashion which was traditional in his class. His children were expensively, though not very efficiently, educated. The girls were sent to schools in England and in France, and the boys, with the exception of John Howard, were sent to Cambridge. It is the custom now among Irish intellectuals to deride the novels of Charles Lever, and to deny that they offer a veracious picture of the Irish people. Nevertheless, Lever was a faithful chronicler of his times, and his portraits of the Anglo-Irish and their retainers among the Celtic Irish were true. The gay and extravagant households where the men were bold and brave and drunken, and the women were beautiful and sometimes indiscreet, existed. The Anglo-Irish morally and spiritually ceased to exist on the day that the Union between England and Ireland was made. Their lives thereafter were passed in a rapid process of degeneration. They might have recovered themselves had they lived on better terms with their tenants, but they abandoned their responsibilities and demanded only their privileges. If the gentlemen of Ireland a hundred years ago had accepted the obligations of their class, we probably would not now be lamenting the lapse of Ireland into a slough of despond from which she will be slow to emerge. The signs were plentiful. Maria Edgeworth plainly portrayed the end in *Castle Rackrent*. Lever, too, had they read him with penetration, must have made them realise that their career was downwards, that soon all they had would be lost, and aristocracy would perish out of Ireland, leaving in its place a ruck of greedy peasants whose sons would turn easily to murder in the pretence that they were performing deeds of patriotism. Lord Castlereagh had better have cut his throat before he did than live to destroy the Irish Parliament and make himself the spiritual ancestor of the Sinn Fein gunman. But the gentlemen of Ireland denied their breeding, misused their lands and their

tenants, and forced a naturally subservient and lord-loving people into positions of defence which presently became positions of offence. And the end of that misery is not yet.

The Parnells and their neighbours might have stepped out of the novels of Lever. Wicklow, like other Irish counties, was inhabited by a hard-living, hard-drinking set which loved hunting and gambling and loud, lavish hospitality. Mr. Parnell's affection for books kept him from the rougher life of his neighbours, such as the Dickinsons, but his children fell into it as if by instinct. His daughter Emily, whom he disinherited because he suspected her of having schemes to elope with Captain Arthur Dickinson, a representative Lever soldier, gives an account of her upbringing in *A Patriot's Mistake*, which shows that the Lever Ireland, though it no longer exists, certainly existed in the middle of the nineteenth century. She describes an incident in her own life which is remarkably like one described in *Charles O'Malley*. After her father's death and her marriage to Captain Dickinson, she was riding round the west corner of Stephen's Green on her horse, "Royal," when a donkey-cart, driven by an old woman, got in their way. The horse jumped clean over the cart, clearing the head of the terrified old woman by a couple of inches. The feat was loudly cheered by jarveys standing by.[1] When Charles O'Malley, who had just landed in Lisbon during the Peninsular War, was riding towards the Plaza, his horse became unmanageable, and to avoid riding down a Portuguese girl, he put it at a mule and cart, and cleared them amid the cheers of the onlookers.[2]

Mr. Parnell engaged in agriculture, concerning which he was considered to be an expert, and he employed people in reclaiming land about Avondale. He was a magistrate and

[1] *A Patriot's Mistake*, by Emily Monroe Dickinson, p. 83.

[2] *Charles O'Malley*, by Charles Lever, chap. xxxvii.

a Deputy-Lieutenant for Wicklow. He liked hunting and shooting, but was fonder still of cricket, which he played very well. His liking for this English game was so great that he maintained a cricket club at his own charge. He was a quiet man on most occasions, although his temper was high when he was roused, and he had an obstinate strain in him which made him difficult to deal with. A rumour that Emily had run away with Captain Dickinson was sufficient to make him alter his will, leaving her out of it, although the rumour was not true. But he greatly disliked the Dickinson family, and was determined, if he could, to prevent a marriage between one of them and his daughter. It seemed to him that he could most easily do this by disinheriting Emily. The event proved that he was wrong, but it would have been better for her if it had proved him right. He insisted, against his doctor's advice, in going up to Dublin from Avondale to play in a cricket match between the Leinster and the Phœnix teams. He had been "suffering from rheumatism of the stomach, and had been warned by Sir Frederick Marsh not to indulge in violent exercise. But he had a determined will, and, like Charley, when he had made up his mind to a thing, carried it out at all cost. The result was that, although in a high fever, he insisted on playing in the match. He felt worse on his return to the Shelbourne Hotel, and sent for a doctor; but it was too late, and he died next day."[1] Mrs. Dickinson says that he went "straight from the cricket match to his solicitor's to make his will," and presumably to disinherit her.[2]

His love of country life was not shared by his young wife, who found Avondale dull after the excitements of New York; but as her babies came, she found herself fully occupied with

[1] *Charles Stewart Parnell*, by his brother, John Howard Parnell, p. 38.
[2] *A Patriot's Mistake*, by Emily Monroe Dickinson, p. 31. Mrs. Dickinson misnames the doctor, who was Sir *Henry* Marsh.

them and with the hospitalities of her home. She was about thirty years of age when Charles Stewart, her eighth child, was born, but was still a little feather-brained, for one day, when she was nursing him, and a visitor was unexpectedly announced, she put him into "the drawer of a large press, which she closed without thinking, and hurried to the drawing-room. When the visitor left, about half an hour later, she found that she had clean forgotten what she had done with Charley, and a frantic search was made, until muffled yells from the drawer where he was imprisoned resulted in his release."[1] Six of her eight children were then alive, one of them, the eldest girl, Delia, being extraordinarily beautiful.

Delia was a dark-haired, dark-skinned girl of medium height and exquisite figure. Her eyes were soft and dark and sad, and her normal mien was melancholy, except when she flushed, and then there was a radiant look on her face When she had finished her schooling in Paris, she was sent to stay with her uncle and aunt, Sir Ralph and Lady Howard, in Belgrave Square, and for three seasons she was a popular beauty. She was an ambitious, calculating girl, resolved on making a fine marriage, and so, when a young American millionaire of family, who had been educated in Paris, proposed to her, she accepted him, although she told him frankly enough that she did not love him and was marrying him for his money. But Mr. Livingston Thomson was infatuated with the lovely girl, and took her on her own terms. He did not long abide by them. He became insanely jealous, and, both at their hotel in Paris and their country house at St. Germains, manifested his jealousy in a way which made him publicly ridiculous. He accompanied her to afternoon receptions, which, it seemed, was not the custom in Paris. He objected to other men putting her cloak about her shoulders, and insisted that this should be done only by himself. Since

[1] *Charles Stewart Parnell*, by his brother, John Howard Parnell, p. 19.

he did not ride, he forbade her, who loved riding and was an accomplished horsewoman, to do so. He rarely left her alone, a sign of devotion which was considered in France to be a sign of insanity. He remembered too well that his beautiful and admired wife had married him without feeling any affection for him, and he was haunted by the unhappy thought that in the crowd of gay and handsome gentlemen who thronged around her in the theatre, at the opera, at receptions, in the Bois, wherever she went, some luckier lover than himself would appear. His jealousy increased as he grew older, and after the birth of their son, Henry, he became morbidly jealous. He informed his wife that they would not have any other children, and banished the boy and his nurse to the extreme end of the house. Her beautiful Russian horses were taken from her, and she was permitted no other exercise than sedate saunters along the terrace of her home at St. Germains in the oppressive company of her husband. She appealed to him to be allowed to ride again, and when he declined to let her, she swallowed a poison and nearly died. Anna Parnell was staying with her then. Mrs. Thomson, horrified by her own act, hurried to her sister's room and told her of what she had done, and Anna, distraught with fear, rushed to her brother-in-law and roused him from his sleep. A doctor was called, and Delia's life was saved. Thereafter, the repentant Mr. Thomson mitigated some of the rigours of his affection for his wife, and she was allowed to ride about the country round St. Germains, accompanied on a bicycle by her delicate son, who suffered from some spinal trouble and was forbidden by the doctors to ride on horses.

All the Parnells were handsome, despite, or perhaps because of, a look of delicacy which they all had. Emily was a pretty, dark girl, fond of music and an accomplished pianist. Sophia was tall and graceful and very lovely. She

had large, dark blue eyes and a mass of fair hair, which, like Portia's, hung "about her temples like a golden fleece." Her delicate pink complexion made a singular contrast with the dark, ivory skin of her eldest sister and the brightly pretty, fragile looks of her second sister, Emily. Fanny, Anna, and Theodosia were dark and attractive, especially Theodosia, the youngest of the Parnell children, but had not the loveliness of their two elder sisters, Delia and Sophia. Hayes and John Howard and Charles Stewart and Henry Tudor were all handsome men. The family was a talented one. Anna painted tolerably well, Fanny wrote good verse, Emily had some reputation as a musician, and the sons had various abilities, mostly in mechanics. But all of them, including Charles, were unable to make the most of their abilities because of some inertia in them which was due, no doubt, to their delicacy. John Howard Parnell was fecund in ideas of value, but never contrived to bring any of them to a successful conclusion because of a failure of staying power. He was the first man to bring fresh peaches from America to Ireland, and might, if he could have formed a partnership with some more practically-minded man, have created profitable industries in Ireland and have made a fortune for himself. But money dribbled away from him, as it dribbled from his brothers and sisters, because neither he nor they could assemble their thoughts long enough to keep it secure.

III

Charles easily became the leader of his brothers and sisters. He was a delicate, yet wiry boy, and was so small for his age, though he afterwards grew tall, that his family nicknamed him "Tom Thumb." He was a difficult child, headstrong and self-willed and rude, with a jealous and distrustful nature. The suspicions which he frequently felt in his

nursery were to remain with him for the whole of his life, increasing as he grew older. He was a mischievous boy, determined to have his own way, and not always too scrupulous about the manner in which he got it. Fanny was his favourite sister, and he and she would shut themselves in an attic, where they would play interminable games of soldiers and retell the tales they had heard from the peasants about their father's estate. There is a familiar story of the way in which he defeated Fanny's soldiers in one of their battles. The armies were drawn up against each other, and the commanders took turn about in trundling a ball against the enemy or assailing them through a pea-shooter. Fanny's men fell in batches, but Charley's soldiers, even when they were struck by the ball, remained upright. Then she discovered that her ingenious brother had carefully glued his men to the ground before the battle began! His turbulent temper interfered with his education, for neither governesses nor tutors would put up with him, and he suffered throughout his life from extensive ignorance. But he had force and determination, and was able to establish his authority at Avondale mainly by demanding the obedience of his brothers and sisters and of the servants. When he could not immediately exact obedience from them, he used to butt them round the room with his head, as if he were a goat, and for this reason got his second nickname, "Butt-head." No one, seemingly, had power to control him, except his nurse, an Englishwoman with the engaging De-la-Mareish name of Mrs. Twopenny, who sometimes slapped him, though she rarely had to punish him at all, so fond was he of her, so fond was she of him. His brother, John Howard, was his chief companion out of doors, but although he felt for him, as he felt for his whole family, a strong love, he seems strangely to have been irritated by him. John asserted that Charley was jealous of him, and perhaps he was, though there seemed to be no occasion for

jealousy, unless it were the fact that the elder brother was popular, while Charles, because of his reserve and coldness with strangers, was not. Whatever the cause of the irritation may have been, the fact remains that Charles rarely neglected to inflict some insult or injury on John. The elder boy stammered badly, and Charles mimicked him so successfully that he contracted a stammer of his own. "He was very fond of fighting," John said to Mr. Barry O'Brien, "and would fight with me if he had nobody else."[1] When John and he went out as retrievers with the guns, and John fetched back more birds than he, he would fly into a violent passion. "When we were playing hockey, I had to keep a sharp look-out for my shins, because Charley always tried to go for me."[2] Throughout Mr. Parnell's account of his brother we find passages in which he narrates some instance of this odd irritation, which frequently ended in blows, immediately followed by contrition. It was, perhaps, the result of a highly-nervous temperament in contact with a slower nature, or of the jealousy to which John Parnell himself attributed it, but it was not enough to cause dislike between the brothers, who remained throughout their lives on terms of affection, despite the fact that their father bequeathed Avondale to the younger of the two.

The relationship between Irish children and their servants is more intimate and familiar than that between English children and their servants, and the young Parnells heard in the kitchen and the stables of Avondale many stories of persecutions, which were increased by others which they heard during their rambles round the country. These tales, more, perhaps, than anything else, influenced Charles Parnell in his politics. One of them, indeed, stirred the mind and imagination of this nervous boy, who suffered from somnambulism and

[1] *Life of Charles Stewart Parnell*, by R. Barry O'Brien, vol. i., p. 37.
[2] *Charles Stewart Parnell*, by his brother, John Howard Parnell, p. 35.

nightmares, to such an extent that when he became a member of Parliament he offered inflexible opposition to punishment by flogging in the army and navy. The story was that a rebel in the Rebellion of 1798 was arrested by English soldiers and sentenced by a court-martial to be whipped to death. The lashes were inflicted, not on the man's back, as was commonly done, but on his belly, and the poor wretch, shrieking with agony, fell bleeding and lacerated to the ground and died. This horrible scene had been witnessed by an old lodge-keeper at Avondale, who must many times have told the story of it to the young boy from " the big house." It was a story which could not fail to affect the thoughts of a sensitive lad who detested cruelty of all sorts, whether to animals or to men.

When he was six years old, his father resolved to send him to an English school, partly because he wished him to learn something of English life, partly to put him into a quieter and less nervous environment than he had at home, and partly to separate him from his elder brother, whose stammering he was so dangerously imitating. The school selected for him was at Yeovil, in Somersetshire, and he was admitted to it as a great favour, for it was a girls' school, and not even little boys were accepted there as pupils. He disliked being sent to this school, because " it was not manly " for a boy to be at a school for girls, but he went to it with the intention of making himself master of the place. He seems to have been happy here, for the principal, Miss Marly, became attached to him, and nursed him, during his second term, through an illness of typhoid fever. His intention to domineer over the girl pupils was frustrated by them, for they all made love to him, and, as he told his brother afterwards, " bothered him out of his life." His turbulence of temper seemed to subside at Yeovil. He got good conduct marks, and when he returned to Avondale his family observed

that he no longer "bossed" them as he had done before he went away. His stay at Yeovil terminated immediately after his recovery from the fever, which had affected his mind to some extent, and for a while he was under the care of Dr. Forbes Winslow.[1] His education was continued at home under his sisters' governess, and then, because of his fierce objection to being instructed by a woman, under a tutor, who, however, made no greater success of his education than the unhappy young lady who had preceded him. A clergyman, the Rev. Henry Galbraith, the rector of Rathdrum, was engaged to instruct him in religion, but the clergyman soon ceased to wrestle with his soul when he found himself made the boy's butt.

He was now eight years old, and rapidly becoming unmanageable, and his parents resolved to send him to another English school, kept by the Rev. Mr. Barton, at Kirk Langley, in Derbyshire, where, despite some displays of obstinate temper, he spent a short but happy time, although he neither liked nor was liked by his school-fellows. His idleness and resistance to authority probably caused Mr. Barton to ask Mr. and Mrs. Parnell not to send him back again to Kirk Langley, and he spent the next few years, until his father's death, at Avondale, picking up scraps of knowledge rather reluctantly, roaming the country with his brother or Mrs. Twopenny, and playing cricket, of which he was fond, although he did not play it well. His nervousness and reserve were increasing. "Even at that time, during the cricket matches, I used to notice Charley's extreme nervousness. His fingers twitched nervously, even while he was watching the match, and I know that in after-days he was just as nervous, though perhaps he did not show it to outsiders. . . ."[2] His outbursts of temper continued. When a clumsy house-

[1] *Charles Stewart Parnell*, by his brother, John Howard Parnell, p. 28.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 31.

maid accidentally smashed some of his collection of eggs, he " flew into a violent passion, and threatened to smash her head, so much so that she ran away and hid in the servants' quarters."[1]

In this rough-and-ready way he spent his boyhood. His careless, casual upbringing made him a half-educated and wholly imperious man, immensely sure of himself, but insufficiently armed with knowledge to be able to use his assurance discreetly. He had a remarkable amount of country lore, sometimes astonishing his relatives by his knowledge of things of which they had supposed him to be ignorant; and he had an uncanny gift, derived, no doubt, from his grandfather, " Old Ironsides " Stewart, of concentrating his thoughts on the essential matter and disregarding all else. He knew very little of his country's history, except what he had heard in Wicklow cottages, but that little lasted. One might suppose that his ignorance of Irish affairs—he knew nothing whatever in his youth of his famous ancestors—was due to his father's ban on political arguments at Avondale, but the supposition would be wrong, for Mr. Parnell died when his son was thirteen, and the ban on political discussions was then raised and never reimposed. He was not the sort of boy who cared about learning. He rarely read books. " The only book I ever saw him read," said a member of his family, " was Youatt's *The Horse*, and he knew that very well."[2] Mr. Michael Joseph Horgan, his host in Cork on many occasions, told Mr. O'Brien that when Parnell had to deliver a lecture on Ireland and her Parliament to the Cork Young Ireland Society, he said: " I really do not know anything about Irish history. Have you got any books I can read?" Mr. Horgan, who knew as little about the subject as Parnell did, found some books for him. " The day of the lecture came.

[1] *Charles Stewart Parnell*, by his brother, John Howard Parnell, p. 32.
[2] *Life of Charles Stewart Parnell*, by R. Barry O'Brien, vol. i., p. 53.

The hour fixed was 8 p.m. We dined a little earlier than usual. 'Now,' said Parnell, rising from the table, 'I must read up the history. Will you give me a pen and ink, and some note-paper?' I put him into a room by himself, with pen, ink, and paper, and the books. I came back about a quarter to nine. He looked up smiling, and said, 'I'm ready!' He had made notes in big handwriting on the paper—about three notes on each sheet. 'I think I will be able to say something now,' he said. . . ."[1]

The lecture appears to have been an enormous success, but more, perhaps, on account of the lecturer than on account of the lecture; for at that time the Irish people would have cheered him all night if he had merely repeated the alphabet to them.

Except for the periods when he was at Yeovil and Kirk Langley, he received no real or continuous education until he was seventeen. The Parnells seem to have spent more thought on the education of their daughters than they spent on the education of their sons, possibly because they concluded that their sons, since they were to inherit landed estates and to lead the lives of Irish country gentlemen, would not require much education, whereas their daughters, poorly dowered, would require all the aids to fine marriages that teachers and professors could give them. This was strictly in accordance with tradition. Irish gentlemen did not feel themselves obliged to spend much thought on the education of their sons who were to inherit landed property. Education, it seemed, was unnecessary for a man who was to live on rent and interest. Thady Quirk, in Miss Maria Edgeworth's invaluable account of eighteenth-century Irish life, *Castle Rackrent*, says of Sir Condy Rackrent, who unexpectedly succeeded to the Rackrent property and title, that he attended college until he was nineteen, "for, as he was not

[1] *Life of Charles Stewart Parnell*, by R. Barry O'Brien, vol. ii., p. 39.

born to an estate, his friends thought it incumbent upon them to give him the best education which could be had for love or money. . . ." The elder girls were sent to Paris to be "finished," and when they had acquired all the accomplishments that the French could bestow upon them, they went for "the season" to the house of their uncle and aunt, Sir Ralph and Lady Howard, where they whirled through balls and sat through plays and operas and were seen in the Park. They bobbed before the Queen at Buckingham Palace, and went through the whole of the elaborate ritual which was prescribed for the well-bred Victorian young woman who earnestly endeavoured to secure a rich and, if possible, handsome husband. Delia and Emily had already curtsied to Queen Victoria and made some sensation, especially the first, with their good looks, and the Parnells were anticipating the time when the lovely Sophia would also be presented at Court. If Delia had astounded London by her beauty, how much more would Sophia, with her golden hair and deep, dark blue eyes, and blush-rose complexion, astound it? The girls were all to marry well. Delia had done so, and was now richly and magnificently established in Paris, delighting the French by her beauty and tormenting her husband by the admiration which it excited. Emily, though not so handsome as her elder sister, would no doubt marry as well, although she was causing her parents some distress by her persistent affection for a really dreadful young man called Dickinson. But a season with the Howards would cure Emily of her girlish romance! . . .

On June 11, 1859, Delia married Mr. Thomson. A few weeks later, her father suddenly died. All of his family, except Charles, were in Paris or at school, and when he was buried in Mount Jerome Cemetery, he was followed to his grave only by his thirteen-year-old son. Neither Mrs. Parnell nor her son John nor his sisters, who were in Paris, returned

to Dublin until after the funeral. They took lodgings near Gardiner Street, and in these lodgings Mr. Parnell's will was read. Avondale was left to his second son, Charles; the Carlow property at Clonmore was left to the third son, Henry Tudor; and only the Armagh estate, Collure, burdened by a head rent of £1,100 per annum payable to Trinity College, Dublin, and annuities to each of his sisters, except Emily, was left to the eldest son, John Howard. Mr. Parnell disinherited his daughter for reasons already given, and he omitted to make any provision for his wife.[1] The will caused consternation among his children. It seemed as if the eldest son had been harshly treated by his father without having done anything to deserve harsh treatment; but afterwards the family discovered that Sir Ralph Howard had promised to make John his heir, and Mr. Parnell, relying on this promise, passed him over in favour of his second and third sons, so that they might all be equally well off. Sir Ralph did not fulfil his promise, but he left John shares in Welsh iron and coal mines which were estimated to bring him £4,000 per annum; he also left him the liability to pay for future calls in this unlimited company. John had to pay the calls or forfeit the shares, which, perhaps, he would have been wiser to have done; for when he had received one dividend amounting to £1,500, the company went bankrupt. The Avondale estate had a free rent-roll, and was worth about £4,000 per annum. The Carlow property brought £2,000 per annum to Henry Tudor Parnell. When John Howard had paid the head rent to Trinity College and the annuities to his sisters, there was nothing left for him.

[1] *Charles Stewart Parnell*, by his brother, John Howard Parnell, p. 61.

IV

And now life changed for the Parnells. Whatever discipline they had had to endure while their father was alive, they no longer endured. Mrs. Parnell promptly had them made wards in Chancery. This was done on the advice of their guardians, Sir Ralph Howard, Bart., and Mr. Johnson, chiefly because Sir Ralph was annoyed at finding himself joined in guardianship to them with Mr. Johnson, a Scotch agricultural expert who was an old friend of Mr. Parnell. The Court appointed Mr. Alfred MacDermott, a solicitor, to manage their affairs, and Mr. MacDermott directed Mrs. Parnell to conduct her children to Avondale, whither he also went to examine the family's affairs, which were in a state of confusion. Economy was urged upon them, advice which was very disagreeable to the widow. A number of unnecessary workmen were dismissed from the estate, and a quantity of live stock and farming implements was sold by auction. It was an expensive matter, even in those times, to be Master of the Hounds, to provide lavish hospitality for hunting neighbours, and to find funds for "finishing" daughters in Paris; and Mr. Parnell, living like a lord, managed to load his estate with debt. Avondale was let, and the Parnells removed to a house named Khyber Pass in Dalkey. Here a desultory attempt, under a tutor, was made to educate the elder sons. Mr. MacDermott, while engaged in straightening out his clients' affairs, decided to offer his hand to Emily Parnell, although he knew that she was secretly engaged to Captain Dickinson. She declined it, but, undaunted, he turned to her sister, Sophia, now about sixteen, and wooed her so ardently that she eloped to Scotland with him, where they were married after the custom of Scotland. Mrs. Parnell was ill at this time, and knew nothing of the affair, nor did Mr. MacDermott make any announcement of it, for to have

done so would have been to expose himself to the wrath of the Lord Chancellor, and the pains and penalties of the law.[1] The young Sophia, now a married woman, returned to her mother's house and remained there, apparently a maid, until she came of age and was dismissed as a ward of Chancery. Mr. MacDermott, being expert in the law, decided when his wife attained her majority that it would be better for her and him to remarry and say nothing about the Scottish ceremony, since the Lord Chancellor, if he were a testy-tempered man, might still punish him for running away with his ward.[2]

In the meantime, Mrs. Parnell and her family had removed from Dalkey, first to the O'Conor Don's house, near Clarinda Park, Kingstown, and then, a year later, to 14, Upper Temple Street, Dublin, from whence Fanny Parnell used sometimes to walk with a poem in her pocket to the office of the *Irish People*. The elder girls—Emily, Sophy, and Fanny—continued their education, learning Italian and German, while John attended at the School of Mining in Stephen's Green for the study of mining and geology. Then Mrs. Parnell, tardily realising that her sons were ill-educated, decided to prepare them for Cambridge, where so many of their ancestors had been, by sending them to a school at Chipping Norton, in Oxfordshire, kept by the Rev. John Wishaw. John, who had never been to school except in Paris, was backward in English, and probably his deficiencies in his own language were too great to enable him to matriculate, for he did not accompany his brother to Cambridge.[3] In spite of Charley's argumentativeness, which involved him in frequent conflicts with the under-masters, and his deep unpopularity with his

[1] *A Patriot's Mistake*, by Emily Monroe Dickinson, p. 35.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 61.

[3] His spelling remained throughout his life remarkably poor. I have seen manuscripts in his handwriting which were hopelessly misspelt. His grammar was as weak as his spelling (St. J. E.).

school-fellows, his terms at Chipping Norton were happy enough, for "being a good dancer, Charley was invited out a great deal, and was a thorough favourite with the girls."[1] He was self-opinionated and irascible. Once, when construing a Greek play, he mistranslated a word. When Mr. Wishaw corrected him, he argued the point, and, after he had looked in the lexicon and found that it supported his master, coolly asserted, "Well, the lexicon says what you say, but I expect the lexicon is wrong." A special coach had been engaged to prepare him for Cambridge, a clever, slightly deformed man, with whom he could not agree on anything. Parnell objected to the master's method of teaching, and continually quarrelled with him, until at last their disagreement terminated in a terrible row. "I can see my brother now, his face aflame with passion, and his mouth twitching nervously, while he denounced the teacher and his methods. Mr. Wishaw had to interfere, and told Charley that if he did not apologise he would be sent home. The apology was finally forthcoming, but it was a very reluctant and grudging one, as Charley fully believed that he was in the right. The result was that he could never endure this teacher afterwards, and his studies suffered considerably in consequence."[2] However, he was happy enough with his riding, hunting, cricket, dancing, and love-making.

It was here that his first love affair took place. This was no more than a boy-and-girl courtship, but he brought to it the intensity of affection and devotion which he was to bring to all his love affairs. It resembled all that followed it in this respect, that it drew him away from his work and left him little time for anything else. His brother, who was as popular with his school-fellows as Charles was unpopular, used continually to see him and the bright, pretty girl he was

[1] *Life of Charles Stewart Parnell*, by his brother, John Howard Parnell, p. 52

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 49.

courting about the roads and lanes of Chipping Norton, but " never joined them, as Charley was very jealous of any other fellow, especially of me." The affair ended when the girl departed from the neighbourhood, and he returned to his studies, determined to master them and qualify himself for the university. His nervous disorder had not abated, and he suffered greatly, during his stay with Mr. Wishaw, from attacks of nerves and somnambulism. About this time he had begun to be superstitious. Signs and portents seriously affected him. When he first appeared at the Chipping Norton Rectory and saw a graveyard before it, his face fell. " I say, John," he said to his brother, " I don't quite like this; I hope I won't get into any rows here." Hardly had he spoken, when he slipped and almost crashed through the glass panel, an accident which immediately became for him confirmation of his fears.

He left Mr. Wishaw's school in 1865, and went up to Cambridge in the same year, entering as a pensioner at Magdalene. Mr. A. C. Benson's refining influence had not yet been exercised to make Magdalene seemly, and it was then essentially a sporting and somewhat rowdy college. Most of the men hunted. The authorities were astounded when a Magdalene man took a degree, and it is probable that among themselves the men considered such an act as slightly disgraceful. Parnell did not increase the reputation of his college for scholarship. The account of his time at Cambridge is obscure. His sister Emily devotes a chapter of her book, *A Patriot's Mistake*, to a painful episode in his university life which is not recorded either in his brother John's *Life* or in the official biography by Mr. Barry O'Brien. Mrs. Dickinson, who had married Captain Dickinson by the time her brother entered Magdalene, was the member of his family who was most constantly with him. She shared with Fanny the first place in his family affections, and she lived with him

at Avondale for a considerable part of her married life, and for a long time after her husband died. Doubt has been cast upon her veracity in connection with this episode, but I am assured by John Howard Parnell's widow that the story is "quite true." Mrs. Dickinson, or, rather, Mrs. Ricketts, for she married a second time, after the publication of her book, took few pains with *A Patriot's Mistake*. It is ill-written and incoherent. Dates are either missing or inaccurate. Names are incorrectly given. She states that the episode to be narrated was the cause of her brother being sent down from his college, when, in fact, he was sent down for a comparatively trivial offence. Nevertheless, she is, I think, to be trusted in this matter. She would hardly have invented a story which did no credit to her beloved brother, and if she had, in some access of insanity, done so, there were several of her relatives and also Mr. Barry O'Brien alive to deny her story when it was published, if it were untrue.

V

The story is that, when he was nineteen, he used very frequently to boat on the Cam. About a couple of miles along the river from the town was a farm, with a fruit garden sloping down to the water, where Parnell often observed a girl of sixteen, named Daisy, the daughter of the farmer, picking fruit. She was a pretty, fair-haired girl, with an innocent expression, and Parnell seems immediately to have fallen in love with her. He contrived an accident to one of his oars, and requested the girl to get some cord for him so that he might repair it. He then arranged to meet her again, enjoining secrecy upon her, lest their affair should come to the knowledge of his college authorities. "He knew it was impossible to marry Daisy, lovely and innocent though she was, as he was under age and a ward in Chancery," says

Mrs. Dickinson, but we may doubt whether the Lord Chancellor's embargo counted for much with Parnell. All of his family had great self-respect, as the Irish call it, or, as others would say, family pride or, perhaps, self-satisfaction. "If the King came to Avondale," said one who knew them well, "they would make no change for him, believing that no one was better than the Parnells." The right of the lord to the young girls on his land was maintained to a later date in Ireland than, perhaps, any other Western European country, and Parnell must have heard many stories of the raping as a right of peasant women by lustful landlords. He was a chivalrous man in his relation with women, especially after he had left Cambridge, but this chivalry is not incompatible with a belief that a gentleman is entitled to take his pleasure among the women of the lower class without being excessively sensitive about it or keeping the affair long on his conscience. The tone of Magdalene at that time probably encouraged him to hold this belief. If the girl on whom the young gentleman fixed his fancy had a child by him, a present of a pound or two would amply compensate her, might even be a blessing to her, for it was likely that a girl of proved fecundity, with a handsome sum of money in her pocket, would, despite the encumbrance of a child, prove irresistibly attractive to some far-seeing, thrifty, unparticular countryman. We need not, therefore, believe that Parnell would have married the fruit-farmer's daughter had he not been in awe of the Lord Chancellor. It is nearly certain that the idea of marrying her never entered his mind. The Parnells would have been horrified if it had. What would their feelings have been, had the owner of Avondale married a peasant girl, when they were dismayed at the marriage of the lovely Sophia to a lawyer? Charles himself, while still a minor, successfully objected to the engagement of his sister Fanny to Mr. Catterson Smith, the artist, on the ground that he had

not yet reached a position which would entitle him to marry a Parnell. It is a proof of his masterfulness that he was able to make Fanny obedient to him, but he did her a disservice, as he himself subsequently realised, for she died a spinster, unsought again by Mr. Smith or by anyone else.

When the girl Daisy had yielded to him, and he was satisfied, coldness came between them. The end of the love-making was that the poor girl drowned herself. Parnell, according to his sister, came round a bend of the river at the very moment that her body was drawn from the water, and the sight of her drove him almost demented. He was a witness, says Mrs. Dickinson, at the inquest, and " while shielding the girl's name from slander . . . admitted having a great admiration and friendship for her, and the shock which her death gave him."[1] Mrs. Dickinson becomes inventive after this account. She begins by declaring that her brother's name " was formally removed from the books of his university " because the heads of his college had heard " various versions of his acquaintance with the dead girl," but, as we shall immediately see, his sequestration was due to another cause. She asserts that he manifested " frenzied grief " and remorse, and was " the frequent victim of violent nervous attacks," during which he had appalling visions of " the dripping white-clad form " standing at the foot of his bed. His family did not discover that he suffered in this way until several years after Daisy's death. Captain Dickinson had one night to share a room with him at Avondale, and on the following morning he went to his wife and said of Parnell, " He has been disturbing me half the night, moaning and calling out about some Daisy, and at one time he got so frenzied with a vision at the foot of the bed that I had to hold him. . . . I will never forget his face when he said, pointing to the foot of the bed, ' Daisy is there.' "

[1] *A Patriot's Mistake*, by Emily Monroe Dickinson, p. 56.

VI

His stay at Cambridge was terminated by trouble in the town. The circumstances of his being "sent down" were authoritatively described to Mr. Barry O'Brien by Mr. Wilfred A. Gill, a Fellow and Tutor of Magdalene, and may be baldly summarised here. Parnell and three friends were returning about half-past ten at night from the station restaurant, where they had been lightly refreshing themselves. Parnell and one of his friends sat down to wait while the other two went off in search of a fly. The statements as to what happened next conflict, but apparently two men were intoxicated and unable to walk home. An offer of assistance was offensively declined, and in a few moments a fight was taking place. Parnell interposed, and was struck for his pains. He promptly knocked his assailant, one Hamilton, down, and then knocked Hamilton's friend after him. A policeman swore that Parnell was sober when the assault took place, but was not believed by the magistrates. Hamilton took an action against Parnell, and was awarded damages amounting to twenty guineas. "On May 26, 1869, a college meeting was convened, at which it was resolved to send down Parnell for the remainder of the term in consequence of the misconduct proved against him. There being only two weeks before the end of the term, the actual punishment was not a severe one, and, had Parnell wished it, there was nothing to prevent his resuming residence in the following term. He did not, however, return to Cambridge."[1] He stayed at Avondale, hunting, playing cricket, idling after the fashion of the young country gentleman, dancing and going to parties. His mother was living at Upper Temple Street, Dublin, where she frequently

[1] *Life of Charles Stewart Parnell,* by R. Barry O'Brien, vol. i., p. 43.

gave entertainments, at which her son invariably attended. "Charles," says his brother John, "was very popular in society, going to all the dances and parties. He used to admire and dance with all the pretty girls at the balls given by Lord Carlisle, then Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland." He joined the militia, and took his training at the Royal Barracks in Dublin. When he was free of his soldiering and his mother's parties, he went down to Avondale, where he dabbled in mining and mathematics. His nervousness continued. His sleep-walking did not cease. His delicacy of health troubled him. But, apart from the poignant remembrances of the girl Daisy, his life was placid now as it had never been before, as it was never again to be. He was approaching his majority, and would soon be the uncontrolled master of a handsome property in a beautiful country. There was no immediate thought of marriage in his head, although there had been expectations of a marriage between him and a lady named Gun-Cunningham. But others thought of marriage for him. His neighbours, some of whom were his kinsmen, such as Lord Carysfort and the Earl of Wicklow, were willing that this rich, if queer, young bachelor should take a wife from among them; and they frequently invited him to their entertainments of all kinds. But he did not get engaged to be married. And here we may note the singular fact that no Irish woman ever succeeded in making Parnell love her. It was an English girl who first roused real love in him; it was an American girl who jilted him; and it was an English woman who married him. He gladly attended the dances and hunts and parties, because, no doubt, they distracted his tormented thoughts; and he engaged in experiments in and about Avondale by means of which he hoped to establish profitable industries. He built a saw-mill, where the timber from his estate was taken to be sawn. His interest in mineralogy occupied much of his time. But his interests, as diversified as they were, did not

include politics or Ireland. He would have called himself a Conservative, perhaps even a Unionist, had he troubled to call himself anything. He did what his class did: hunted, joined the militia, attended levées at the Castle or the Lodge, danced, dined, developed his property, and conserved the interests of his family. His income was large, but the demands on it were also large. He had to maintain his mother, to whom his father had not bequeathed a penny-piece, and to make additional provision for his sisters, who had only the small annuities due to them from the property of their elder brother, John; and the evidence shows that he did not stint them, although he was reputed to be close with money. The legend of his unsociable character is not supported by the facts of his youth or the testimony of his neighbours, rich or poor. He certainly was unpopular in England, whether at school or at Cambridge or in Parliament, but much of this unpopularity was due to his excessively shy and nervous nature, which made him awkward and uncouth in the company of strangers. Some of it was undoubtedly due to his deliberate policy: he did not desire to get on terms of intimacy or kindliness with Englishmen, because he feared that if he were to do so he would be unable to carry on his political campaign as effectively as he could on terms of open enmity. We shall shortly see why he held this belief; it was, I think, erroneous, but not ill-founded. But he was not unpopular in his own place. Servants loved him; the Wicklow gentry continued to like him, even after he had joined the Nationalists—a very striking testimony to his likeability when it is remembered what passions were provoked by the politics of that time; and the peasants were always his friends.

He began to dominate his family's affairs as he had tried to dominate his brothers and sisters in the nursery, and his control of the purse enabled him to do so. Three of his sisters—Delia, Emily, and Sophia—were now married, and,

with the exception of Emily, well-to-do. Emily had married her father's bane, Captain Arthur Dickinson, who had retired in a more or less penniless condition from the army, and was now endeavouring to get an income in a gentlemanly, but not too exacting, fashion. Parnell persuaded his brother John, who had resolved to try his fortune in America, to appoint Captain Dickinson agent for the Collure estate, and John, in this, as in all else, easily influenced by his younger brother, agreed to do so. He would have saved money if he had maintained his brother-in-law in idleness. Captain Dickinson seems to have had peculiar ideas about the duties of an agent. Mainly he drew his salary, but did not do any work for it. Rent easily fell into arrear in those days, but Mr. John Parnell's tenants received no incentive from his agent to pay any; and there came a time when this singularly incompetent and drunken military gentleman had to be relieved, not of his duties, for he did not perform them, but of his salary. Parnell was wise enough not to employ Captain Dickinson in any capacity, but he made him free of Avondale and probably allowed him the use of his purse. It was Captain Dickinson who proposed that Parnell's coming-of-age should be celebrated in the real old-fashioned, Leverish, Irish gentlemanly way. It may be said that the eighteenth century lasted in Ireland for a hundred and eighty years. The nineteenth began on the day when Mr. Gladstone introduced his first Home Rule Bill into the House of Commons in 1886. It has not yet ended. The life at Avondale, when the young squire came of age, was the sort of life that was customary in England when Sheridan was alive. Practical joking and large, rowdy hospitality were its main characteristics. The peasant's dream of Paradise as a place where there were " lashin's of atein' an' drinkin' " was realised in the home of his landlord. Heaven, for the poor Irishman, was a place like Avondale.

We may learn something of the manners of the Irish aristocracy of this time from an account of Parnell's great-aunt, Mrs. Sophia Evans, given by Miss Frances Power Cobbe.[1] Mrs. Evans, who was sister to the first Lord Congleton and "old Tom Parnell" and William Parnell, the grandfather of Parnell, had the habits of her generation and the oddity of her family. On the shore below her deer-park, under lofty black cliffs, were several very imposing caverns. "In the largest of these, which is lighted from above by a shaft, Mrs. Evans on one occasion gave a great luncheon party, at which I was present. The company were all in high spirits and thoroughly enjoying the pigeon pies and champagne, when someone observed that the tide might soon be rising. Mrs. Evans replied that it was all right, there was plenty of time, and the festival proceeded for another half-hour, when somebody rose and strolled to the mouth of the cavern and soon uttered a cry of alarm. The tide had risen and was already beating at a formidable depth against both sides of the rocks which shut in the cave. A night spent in the further recesses of that damp hole, even supposing the tide did not reach the end (which was very doubtful), afforded anything but a cheerful prospect. Could anyone get up through the shaft to the upper cliff? Certainly, if they had a long ladder. But there were no ladders lying about the cave; and, finally, everybody stood mournfully watching the rising waters at the mouth of their prison. Mrs. Evans all this time appeared singularly calm, and administered a little encouragement to some of the fainting ladies. When the panic was at its climax, Mrs. Evans's own large boat was seen quietly rounding the projecting rocks, and was soon comfortably pushed up to the feet of the imprisoned party, who had nothing to do but to embark in two or three detachments and be safely landed in the bay

[1] *Life of Frances Power Cobbe*, by herself, vol. i., p. 184.

outside, beyond the reach of the sea. The whole incident, it is to be suspected, had been arranged by the hostess to infuse a little wholesome excitement among her country guests. . . ."

Miss Cobbe continues her account of Mrs. Evans with this story of her church-going:

"Our small village church at Donabate was not often honoured by this lady's presence, but one Sunday she saw fit to attend service with some visitors; and a big dog unluckily followed her into the pew and lay extended on the floor, which he proceeded to beat with his tail after the manner of impatient dogs under durance. This disturbance was too much for the poor parson, who did not love Mrs. Evans. As he proceeded with the service, and the rappings were repeated again and again, his patience gave way, and he read out this extraordinary lesson to his astonished congregation: 'The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself. Turn out that dog, if you please! It's extremely wrong to bring a dog into church!'"

Mrs. Dickinson gives an account of a groom at Avondale, called James, which might have been lifted from Lever. This man was of drunken habits, and had, after giving much cause for complaint, been told that he must either sign the pledge or leave his employment. He elected to sign the pledge. "One morning the party was assembled at eight o'clock in the dining-room for breakfast, both ladies and gentlemen in hunting costume, prior to starting for the day's sport. James knocked at the door, and on being told to come in, entered. In plain and forcible language he informed the company in general, and me in particular, that he was too 'intoxicated' to ride after me that day. He said he thought it best to let me know beforehand, as if he were to mount a horse in his condition some irremediable mischief might ensue. Moreover, like a true son of Adam, he blamed

his wife for the unlucky occurrence, as she had been so inconsiderate as to present him during the night with a sixth baby, a piece of bad luck, in his opinion, which he evidently considered an ample excuse for his incapable state."[1]

In the spirit of Mrs. Evans and the drunken groom, Parnell's attainment of his majority was celebrated. A three-days' cricket match was arranged between the officers of the garrison in Dublin and the Wicklow team. The officers were to be housed at Avondale. A military band was brought from Dublin and lodged at the local hotel. Captain Dickinson was put in charge of the catering, and, as he was given carte-blanche and felt that he had to uphold the credit of the army, he spent his brother-in-law's money in a very lavish manner. A great many people from the county and the capital were present at the luncheon, after which the cricket was less enthusiastically played than it had been before. Dining and dancing and supping kept the house alive until almost dawn. On the second day the cricket match was resumed, and more guests came down from Dublin, including a pretty widow who was to be put up for the night. The match went on well enough until after luncheon, when, in spite of Parnell's attempts to hold the team together, the soldiers declined to play any longer, preferring to wander in the woods with the women.

"Now commenced a scene of fun and flirtation which surpasses description, and which had probably never before been equalled in the old haunts of Avondale." Parnell, following the custom, went off with a lady who was minded to marry him, though he was not minded to marry her; and Mrs. Dickinson, temporarily discarded by her husband for the company of the widow, paired off with a young politician, Mr. Frederick C——, who, she avers, was fond of her, but had hitherto treated her with respect. "On this occasion,

[1] *A Patriot's Mistake*, by Emily Monroe Dickinson, p. 145.

however, having, in common with the rest, shown due appreciation of his host's excellent champagne, he rashly declared his love, but was quickly recalled to his senses when, turning on him like a little fury and stamping my foot, I demanded how he dared insult me. 'Oh!' moaned poor Frederick, 'now I have vexed you, and you won't be friends with me any more.' Overcome with emotion, he threw himself on the grass and sobbed like a child. This novel spectacle brought all the cows round in wondering surprise to gaze at him. 'Get up,' I told him hard-heartedly, still too indignant for a softer mood; 'the cows are laughing at you'; whereupon Frederick arose, made his peace with me, and we both entered into a compact of friendship which lasted for years."[1]

After dinner that night there was a quarrel between Captain Dickinson and Major G——. The latter, having been conquered by Mrs. Dickinson's charms, conceived a feeling of hostility for her husband, which Captain Dickinson reciprocated. "Arthur approached and demanded of Major G——, 'What the devil do you mean by dancing so often with my wife?' 'What's that to you? Mind your own business,' retorted Major G——," and was immediately challenged to fight it out on the lawn. But the quarrel was composed by Parnell, and the angry, drink-sodden warriors were persuaded to keep the peace. The women went to bed, after the problem of finding a room for the widow was solved by putting her into one which had been occupied on the previous night by two officers. There was no key to the door of this room, so the widow was advised to push a chest of drawers against it to keep out intruders, if there should be any. When the men ascended the stairs to their beds, the two officers who had previously slept in the widow's room went, in the company of some others, to sleep

[1] *A Patriot's Mistake*, by Emily Monroe Dickinson, p. 72.

in it again. "Finding the door barricaded, they hurled themselves against it, and upsetting with a crash the chest of drawers, entered the room. 'I say, there's room for us all here,' one called out. The startled widow, on hearing this, slipped out of bed and escaped. Three more of the hilarious party ensconced themselves in the linen-press, which they mistook for their beds, another installed himself cosily in the shower-bath, and a fifth made frantic attempts to get up the chimney. . . ." The cricket match ended in confusion on the third day, and the guests departed. "The county families also bade hostess and host good-night, expressing with seeming sincerity grateful thanks for the pleasant time they had had, but, notwithstanding that they had partaken of Charley's hospitality and enjoyed themselves immensely, afterwards professed themselves much shocked, and abused the whole entertainment soundly."

Parnell was twenty-three years of age when he left Cambridge in 1869. During the whole of his life up to that time, and for several years afterwards, he manifested no interest in Irish affairs, other than impatience with his mother's fantastic interference in them, except on one occasion. In September, 1867, two Fenian leaders, Kelly and Deasy, were arrested in Manchester, and their comrades resolved to rescue them. An attack was made on the prison van containing them while it was on the way to the prison at Bellevue. Kelly and Deasy were liberated after a policeman, Sergeant Brett, had been killed. The manner of this policeman's death was thus: He was seated inside the van guarding the prisoners, and was called upon to deliver up the keys, but refused. One of the Fenians, named Allen, then fired a revolver into the lock to force it, and Sergeant Brett, who had bent down to look through the keyhole, received the bullet in his head. Allen, Larkin, Condon, and O'Brien, four of the Fenians, were arrested, tried, and sentenced to death, although Allen,

who fired the shot, passionately protested that he had had no intention of killing the unfortunate policeman, but was merely trying to blow off the lock of the van door. A police constable, named Shaw, swore at the trial that in his opinion Allen fired, as he said, to dislodge the lock. It is inconceivable that these men would have been found guilty of murder in a less anxious time. The crime was one of manslaughter, and Allen alone was guilty of it. John Bright, nine years later, said, " I believe that the three men were hanged because it was a political offence, and not because it was an ordinary murder of one man, committed by one man, and by one shot. I believe it was a great mistake." But Allen, Larkin, and O'Brien were hanged in front of Salford Jail on the morning of November 23, 1867. Condon was reprieved.

The execution of these men, which at the moment excited great jubilation in England, filled Ireland with sorrow. A commemorative funeral, in which 150,000 persons participated, either as followers or onlookers, was held in Dublin. " As the three hearses, bearing the names of the executed men, passed through the streets, the multitudes that lined the streets fell on their knees, every head was bared, and not a sound was heard save the solemn notes of the Dead March in ' Saul ' from the bands, or the sobs that burst occasionally from the crowd."[1] The feeling in Ireland was not confined to Fenians or their friends: it was shared by many Unionists. Parnell himself, despite his indignation with his mother because of her sympathy with the Fenians, was moved by the fate of " The Manchester Martyrs," as they have ever since been known.

Some of his biographers have dated his interest in Irish politics from the day on which Allen and Larkin and O'Brien

[1] *Life of Charles Stewart Parnell*, by R. Barry O'Brien, vol. i. p. 50.

were hanged, but it seems more likely that it was only one of a series of events which finally landed him in the leadership of the Irish party. The stories which he had heard in Wicklow cabins of the cruelties practised towards the peasants in 1798 were undoubtedly the beginning of the influence. His mother's fierce and unreasonable antipathy to England was a powerful part of it. His beloved sister, Fanny, must have shaken his thoughts on the subject, though he mocked at her poems. And the fate of "The Manchester Martyrs" undoubtedly affected him in the way in which he had been affected by the story of the rebel who was flogged on the belly by the orders of a foul ruffian, called Colonel Yeo, until he dropped dead and almost in pieces.

But immediately the execution of "The Manchester Martyrs" did no more than rouse his detestation of an act of injustice. What he felt then was what any honourable man might have felt, and it certainly did not divert him from the traditions in which he was born and brought up. We have already noted how strongly he disliked his mother's activities in Fenian affairs, and that he threatened, after she had harboured one of the men implicated in this very Manchester crime and helped him to escape to America, "that he would leave the house if anything more was said about the Fenians." He was still a Conservative, still an Irish landlord, still contemptuous of the people who composed the Irish party. Whatever his emotion was when "The Manchester Martyrs" were hanged, it did not prevent him, when he left Cambridge, from joining the militia and taking an oath to serve the Queen, which might have compelled him to fire on his own countrymen had there been occasion to do so. In that state of mind he remained for five years after he was sent down.

It was not, according to his brother John, until he had been lightly jilted by an American girl that he sought for some distraction in political affairs. Between the years 1869 and

1871 he very frequently went to Paris, where his mother, incapable of resting long in one place, now lived with her younger daughters, who were permitted to go there by the Lord Chancellor. Mrs. Parnell's eldest daughter, Delia Thomson, as well as her mother, Mrs. Stewart, now definitely separated from " Old Ironsides," and her brother, Colonel Stewart, who had made a large fortune out of the sale of timber to the French Government during the Second Empire, were also living in Paris. Parnell had, therefore, as many ties in Paris as he had in Ireland, and he " thought nothing of making a flying trip to France to attend one " of the balls given at the British Embassy, to all of which he was invited. It was while he was in Paris, staying with his brother at their uncle's flat in the Champs Elysées, that he met a very beautiful, fair-haired, vivacious, and wealthy American girl, called Miss Woods. They immediately fell in love with each other —all of Parnell's love affairs were instantaneous—and became engaged to be married.[1] They were seen about in Paris a great deal, and were widely congratulated by their friends. When Miss Woods and her parents suddenly decided to go to Rome, Parnell followed them there, and, although Mr. and Mrs. Woods were noticeably uneffusive in their reception of him, their daughter greeted him as affectionately as ever. He remained in Rome, mostly in Miss Woods's company, until his uncle warned him that the season of the Roman fever was approaching. He had always been afraid of illness, and was terrified of death, so, despite his love for Miss Woods, he resolved to leave Italy. He returned to Avondale and busied himself about his property until he went back to Paris, where Miss Woods was again living. Their affection seemed to have increased, and when he left Paris for

[1] Mrs. Dickinson's account of this affair in *A Patriot's Mistake* is almost entirely inaccurate. Mr. O'Hara's reference to it in *Chief and Tribune* is partly inaccurate.

Avondale in the spring of 1871, it was for the purpose of preparing his home for his bride.

Hardly had he arrived at Avondale when he received a letter from the lady, announcing in terse terms that she and her parents were returning to their home at Newport, Rhode Island. She did not refer to her engagement, nor did she express any regret at her departure without seeing him again. Parnell, naturally, was dumbfounded by this singular missive. He hurried to Paris, only to discover that Miss Woods had already sailed for the United States. He determined to follow her, and on his arrival in America immediately went to Newport to see her. This odd young woman received him with affection, and allowed him to believe that the engagement still existed, but in the end she capriciously announced that she could not marry him because he was " only an Irish gentleman," without any distinction or public name. The lady was romantic, and demanded some celebrity with her husband. Parnell, it seemed, had nothing but his gentility to offer her, and that, though highly esteemed in Ireland, cut no ice in America. His efforts to change her decision were desperate, and at last he left Newport and journeyed to Alabama, where his brother John was growing cotton and peaches.

His misery was acute, and he sought distraction from it in visiting mines and mills, where he hoped to gain knowledge and experience by which he could profit at home; and in time his pain subsided, though it had effects upon him which were to last for the rest of his life. Mr. John Parnell asserts that his decision to enter Irish politics was due to his desire to occupy his thoughts with other matters than his rejection by Miss Woods. This is not improbable. He was excessively proud, and Miss Woods had wounded his pride. She had jilted him because he was only an Irish estate-owner, and had filled him with mortification by her announcement that this

fact, by itself, was unimportant. He was twenty-five years of age, but he had "done nothing" and showed no signs of ever doing anything. He had been reared in the belief that to be a Parnell was enough, and now he was told that it was not. He seemed suddenly, while half-dazed by the blow he had received from Miss Woods, to see everywhere signs of contempt for Irishmen; and his feelings ranged from shame of acknowledging that he was Irish to a fierce assertion of his race. Already we have noted how he urged his brother not to inform Colonel Powell that they were Irish.[1] After they had been to see a State Governor, Charles surprised John by saying, "You see that fellow despises us because we are Irish. But the Irish can make themselves felt everywhere if they are self-reliant and stick to each other. Just think of that fellow. Where has he come from? And yet he despises the Irish."[2] That is a significant speech. It contains the whole of Parnell's policy as a statesman: self-reliance and unity; and it was on that policy that he brought the Irish people within reach of their deep-rooted desire. We will find that his political life was dominated by the belief that "the Irish can make themselves felt everywhere if they are self-reliant and stick to each other," and that he, alone in Ireland, was able to make them self-reliant and united. We will find, too, that when he died, disunion among the Irish became a sort of anarchy.

The idea which was to send him rocketing up to the apex of authority was in his mind, growing almost without his knowledge, certainly without his desire. But now he was no more than a jilted young man, whose love and vanity had been abased by a pretty and capricious girl. He became ill-tempered and quarrelsome, and was full of complaints about the people, the place, the food, the negroes, and the

[1] *Ante*, p. 41.

[2] *Charles Stewart Parnell*, by R. Barry O'Brien, vol. i., p. 54.

rough way in which his brother lived. He disliked the blacks and despised the whites. The greasy Southern cooking sickened him. Nervous irritability again possessed him, and his digestion, always poor, rendered him ill to live with. A peach-farm in Alabama was no place for a Parnell, he said, and so he repeatedly urged his brother to return to Ireland, which John, who loved his life in Alabama, was reluctant to do. His ill-temper increased and involved him in several rows, and almost brought him into collision with the law. When an Ulsterman, named Joseph Field, for whom John was building a house, asserted with some rudeness that the house was not fit for him, " Charley lost his temper, and cried, ' It is too good for you !' This led to angry words, and very nearly to blows, Charley having actually taken off his coat with the intention of thrashing Mr. Field when I separated them."[1] The quarrel ended as quickly as it had begun, the friendship was repaired, and Mr. Field kept Parnell in warm remembrance ever afterwards. He had the ability to create kindly feeling for himself out of the rags of his wrath.

This visit to America lasted for a year, and was notable, apart from the dismal conclusion to his engagement to Miss Woods, for the fact that he and John were nearly killed in a railway accident. John was the more seriously injured of the two, and he tells us that " Charley was the only nurse I had, though he also was suffering from his injuries. He attended to my wants better and more tenderly than any woman could have done, and was most anxious about me, never leaving me. . . ."[2] It was after this disaster that Parnell succeeded in persuading his brother to return to Ireland, and on New Year's Day, 1872, they sailed for home from New York.

[1] *Charles Stewart Parnell,* by his brother, John Howard Parnell, p. 106.

[2] *Ibid.,* p. 102.

Soon after their arrival, Sir Ralph Howard died in London, leaving the bequest to John which has already been noted, and Colonel Stewart died in Rome of the Roman fever against which he had warned his nephew a year or two earlier. He left the whole of his large fortune in Southern Railroad bonds and shares to Mrs. Parnell, and made her practically a millionairess.

Fortune was favouring the Parnells. They were handsome and highly esteemed, and had inherited great possessions. They could move freely in the finest company in England, France, Ireland, and America. Their health, indeed, was poor, and the darkness of another inheritance than that of wealth and beauty hung above their heads. Delia, despite her riches and her Russian horses, was yielding to the melancholy in her eyes, and Anna was ominously prone to fits. There were times when Charles himself terribly felt the burden of his tormented nerves. Nevertheless, in 1872 the world looked very well to the Parnells. John and Charles had four thousand pounds a year apiece and property. Their younger brother, Henry, now at Cambridge, had an estate worth two thousand pounds a year. Mrs. Parnell was immensely rich, and could afford to give large allowances to her daughters. In that sunniness of fortune they could forget the dark shadow lying over them, and they did not delay to enjoy their prosperity. John and Charles spent their time in pleasant occupations—hunting and shooting and pleasuring of all sorts. The supervision of his beautiful estate provided Charles with serious occupation, and it seemed that he was settling down to the ordained life of a country gentleman. He was appointed High Sheriff of his county and a synodsman of the Church of Ireland. He had only to marry a suitable girl and beget children by her, and his career as a landed proprietor would be established. There was quiet in his life. Nothing of notable importance happened to him

between the years 1871 and 1874, except, perhaps, that another beautiful American woman met him in Paris and passionately pursued him with her affection. Beautiful American women were not then to his liking, and he fled from France to escape from this pertinacious and too demonstrative lady, who actually proposed marriage to him. But although nothing of notable importance happened to him, the roots of the idea were spreading. Mr. Isaac Butt, the Protestant leader of the Catholic Irish party, was then discoursing in his large, eloquent, amiable, Micawber-like manner on the rights of tenant farmers, a matter which nearly concerned the Parnells, since they were landlords. It very especially concerned John Parnell, whose rack-rented and heavily-mortgaged estate in Armagh caused trouble between him and his tenants. Mr. Butt's eloquence was impressive, but totally uninfluential. The English Parliamentarians loved to listen to him, but they never thought of heeding him. It was in 1874 that Charles Stewart Parnell, then twenty-eight years of age, began for the first time in his career to think seriously about politics. In that year he started his political life.

CHAPTER III

HIS ENTRY INTO POLITICS

I

It began with a quarrel with a cabman. Captain and Mrs. Dickinson had invited John and Charles Parnell to dine with them. He had been in Cork, and, on his arrival at Kingsbridge Station, found that he was likely to be late for dinner, so he jumped on to a jaunting car, and said to the jarvey, "I'll give you half a crown if you get me to 22, Lower Pembroke Street by seven o'clock, or nothing at all if you are a minute after that." The jarvey agreed to the terms proposed, but failed to get his passenger to the Dickinsons' house until just after seven. He lost his temper, demanded his fare, and used language such as only a practising Catholic can use. But Parnell held him to his bargain, and left him on the pavement, calling on the saints in heaven to avenge him. The incident was, perhaps, hardly as creditable to Parnell as he imagined, but the jarvey might have got his money if he had kept a civil tongue in his head. It was this affair which provided most of the talk at the table. Never was there a company less likely to discourse on politics in a solemn fashion. But when the cabman's behaviour had been discussed until they were all tired of hearing about it, the conversation vaguely veered towards the rights of tenant farmers and Mr. Butt's whole political proposals. Most of the talking was done by John Parnell and his brother-in-law, Charles contenting himself with listening. When the subject had been well argued, Charles suddenly announced that Mr. Butt's movement would be "a grand opening for me to enter politics." The announcement startled his auditors, who had never heard him express any political opinions before. If they had thought of him as a political candidate, they would probably have thought of him as a Conservative. But

he was proposing to join the Nationalists. Hardly had they realised what his proposal was, when he daunted them with the suggestion that they should accompany him that very minute to the offices of the *Freeman's Journal*, where he proposed to announce his adhesion to the Irish party to Mr. Gray, the editor. John declined to go, but Captain Dickinson went with him.[1] They did not return to Lower Pembroke Street until two in the morning. Parnell had been rebuffed. Mr. Gray had reminded him that he was High Sheriff of Wicklow, and informed him that he could not become a candidate for Parliament until his resignation had been tendered to, and accepted by, the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland. To a man of swift decisions this technical disability was excessively annoying.

On the following morning he hurried off to the Viceregal Lodge and offered his resignation to the Viceroy, Lord Spencer, who, however, could not immediately accept it because certain formalities had first to be concluded. The delay meant that he would be too late for nomination for the vacant constituency of Wicklow. Here was something to gall the impatient Parnell. Miserable technicalities prevented him from fulfilling his desire! He resented the Lord-Lieutenant's refusal to set him free immediately from his shrieval duties, and was in such a state of mind about it that he persuaded himself to believe that the technicalities were devised to frustrate him. He had been slighted by the Lord-Lieutenant! The thought, says his brother, "stung Charley deeply, and left him with a feeling of resentment against the English

[1] There is a slight discrepancy between the account of this incident given by Mr. Barry O'Brien and that given by Mr. John Parnell. Mr. O'Brien, who received his account from Mr. John Parnell, states in the *Life* that the two brothers went to see Mr. Gray, but Mr. Parnell himself, in *his* book, states that Captain Dickinson went with Charles, he, John, declining to do so. The Parnells had defective memories, but it is probable that the account in Mr. Parnell's book is accurate.

Government which quickly became a rooted portion of his character." The cause of the offence seems as trivial as the cause of that which he took when the police impounded his regimentals; but this insubordinate, quick-tempered young man was in the mood to suspect that anything which opposed his will was malignantly-minded. But it was useless to repine. The law was clear. A High Sheriff, who had duties to perform in a Parliamentary election, could not himself be a candidate at that election, nor could he be replaced at a moment's notice. At dinner on the night of the day when he had interviewed the Viceroy, Parnell announced a new decision. If he could not stand for Wicklow, his brother could, and before the abashed John, whose heart was in his Alabama peach-farm, could successfully marshal his objections to the proposals, he found himself consenting to be the candidate and reading his election address, which Charles drew up. Once more the elder brother, against his wish, was directed by the younger. As it had been in Alabama, so it was now in Wicklow, and was to be until the younger brother died. The address was short and full of point, and read well. It was Charles Parnell's first political document, and on that account must here be reproduced.

II

To the Electors of the County Wicklow.

GENTLEMEN,

Believing that the time has arrived for all true Irishmen to unite in the spontaneous demand for justice from England that is now convulsing the country, I have determined to offer myself for the honour of representing you in Parliament.

The principles for which my ancestor, Sir John Parnell, then Chancellor of the Irish Exchequer, refused the peerage from an English Government are still mine, and the cause

of the Repeal of the Union under its new name of Home Rule will always find in me a firm and honest supporter.

My experience of the working of the Ulster system of Land Tenure in the North convinces me that there is no other remedy for the unfortunate relations existing between landlord and tenant in other parts of Ireland than the legalisation through the whole of the country of the Ulster Tenant Right, which is practically Fixture of Tenure, or some equivalent or extension of a custom which has so increased the prosperity of the thriving North.

A residence of several years in America, where Religious and Secular Education are combined, has assured me that the attempt to deprive the youth of the country of spiritual instruction must be put down, and I shall give my support to the Denominational System in connection both with the University and the Primary branches.

Owing to the great tranquillity of the Country, I think it would now be a graceful act to extend the Clemency of the Crown to the remaining Political Prisoners.

My grandfather and uncle represented this County for many years, and as you have experienced their trustworthiness, so I also hope you will believe in mine.

I am, gentlemen,

Yours truly,

JOHN HOWARD PARNELL.

III

Charles did not permit the grass to grow under his feet. The other candidates were already in the field, and their election addresses were before the constituents. The Parnells must move very quickly if they were to make any impression at all. John found himself hurried to the hustings in a way which made him long more ardently than ever for the leisurely life of Alabama. Charles delivered his first political speech on a barrel in the market-place of Rathdrum during a fair, and was suspiciously received by the assembled electors. What, thought they, were these wild, whirling,

Nationalist words doing in the mouth of a landlord generally regarded as a staunch Conservative? Had it not been for the support he received from the parish priest, Father Galvin, he might have been thrown from his barrel; and if he had, may we not imagine, knowing what his proud nature was, that his career as a Nationalist would there and then have ended? He was to be assailed a few years later in Enniscorthy, but by that time he had established himself in Nationalism and could see the leadership of the Irish people well in sight. These are the singular accidents of fortune. Had Miss Woods been less assiduous in the reading of romantic literature, she might not have demanded distinction in her husband, and would, perhaps, have married Parnell and have settled him in an agreeable life in Wicklow, with frequent visits to Newport and Paris and London. Had some lout, inflamed as much by patriotism as by porter, flung a damaged apple or a rotten egg at Parnell, gesticulating on his barrel in the market-place of Rathdrum, he might have altered the history of England and Ireland. But these are idle speculations which may not profitably be pursued.

The organisation of John's candidature was swift and efficient. When the bashful and reluctant candidate descended from the train at Rathdrum, he found himself surrounded by a reception committee of priests, " most of whom did not know either Charley or myself." A band was strenuously performing patriotic airs, and as soon as the introductions had been made, the candidate, led by his brother and the hypnotised priests, formed a procession behind the robust musicians and marched off, followed by a large crowd, to Father Galvin's presbytery, where an enthusiastic conference was held. On the next day Charles hurled himself into Hacketstown and West Wicklow, where he was uncivilly received. He did everything that a High Sheriff ought not to do during an election, even registering his vote, which was disallowed,

and when he was warned that his conduct would probably result in his dismissal from his office, he retorted that that was exactly what he wanted to happen. He was astute enough to know that a little martyrdom would be useful to him when he offered himself for election. When, in his capacity as High Sheriff, he declared the result of the poll, his brother was found to be at the bottom of it. There can be few men in this world who have so thoroughly enjoyed being defeated as John Parnell did, and he took himself as quickly as he could to America away from the dangerous company of his brother. His journey there, however, was saddened by the fact that Mrs. Parnell had lost nearly all her inheritance from her brother in the Black Friday Panic which swept over the American stock markets. She had enjoyed its possession, in theory rather than in fact, for little more than a year.

Soon after his departure, Colonel Taylor, one of the members for the county of Dublin, was appointed by Disraeli to the Chancellorship of the Duchy of Lancaster, and had to seek re-election. Charles Parnell had joined the Home Rule League, which was anxious to contest the seat, despite the fact that Colonel Taylor was certain to be re-elected, but had difficulty in finding a candidate to fight so forlorn a hope. He offered himself as the Home Rule candidate, but was not received with enthusiasm. Mr. Butt, when the young landlord had gone to him proposing to join the League, had been delighted with him. " My dear boy," he exclaimed to one of his friends, " we have got a splendid recruit, an historic name, my friend, young Parnell, of Wicklow; and unless I am mistaken, the Saxon will find him an ugly customer, though he is a good-looking fellow." Mr. Butt himself was to find him an ugly customer five years after their first encounter, for by that time the tongue-tied, singularly uninformed stripling from Wicklow had ejected Mr. Butt from his leadership and landed him with a broken heart in his

grave. Mr. Butt's enthusiasm for Parnell was not felt by the Home Rule League. The young man undoubtedly had merits. He was able to pay his own election expenses, a fact which probably turned the scales in his favour, and he was a landlord, a Protestant, and an aristocrat.

But he was barely known to the members of the League. Those of them who had met him disesteemed him. His diffidence; his reticence, so unlike the large, lavish manner of Mr. Butt; his complete ignorance of political affairs and seeming inaptitude for them—all these made the Home Rule Leaguers reluctant to accept him as their candidate. If they were to make a demonstration, even in a hopeless constituency, they must make one which would not cover them with ridicule. That was the fate they feared. Mr. Parnell's political stock-in-trade seemed to consist solely of references to "The Manchester Martyrs." He talked of them in stutters, and could not talk of anything else. It was as if he thought he had only to mention "The Manchester Martyrs" three times and he had formulated a policy. The Leaguers debated about him. Was he a twister? What guarantee had they that this young landlord was not about to play some crooked game with them? "If he gives his word," said Mr. John Martin, an old and respected Nationalist, "I will trust him. I would trust any of the Parnells." But even the support of Mr. Martin did not incline the others towards him. They called him into the conference-room, so that they might inspect and examine him, and he entered, a tall, thin, handsome, delicate young man, with eyes that seemed remote until he was roused, when fires kindled in them, brown fires that scorched those who beheld them. We do not know what he said or did during that period of probation, but we do know that, when it was over, he was the Home Rule candidate for the county of Dublin.

His first public meeting was a terrible failure. It was held

in the Rotunda, Dublin, in the afternoon of March 9, 1874, under the chairmanship of the O'Gorman Mahon, an old soldier of fortune who took to politics when duelling went out of fashion, and was destined a few years later, by the malignancy of fate, to introduce his friend, Captain O'Shea, to the young man now standing, trembling and white-lipped, by his side. Although the hour was early, a large crowd, drawn by the knowledge that he was one of the Parnells, had assembled to hear him, and the platform was occupied by men long seasoned in Nationalist politics. Honest John Martin, who had testified to the trustworthiness of his family, Isaac Butt, A. M. Sullivan, Mitchell Henry, and Richard O'Shaughnessy, names that are now rarely remembered, but belonging to men of high reputation in their time, came to listen to the squire of Avondale making his adoption speech. Mr. Sullivan proposed the resolution that Mr. Parnell should be their candidate, and while he was speaking the candidate came into the hall. He was unknown to nearly every person in the hall, but a singular enthusiasm took hold of the audience, and even before they were certain that this was indeed the candidate, they were on their feet cheering him. Parnell never enjoyed public meetings. To the end of his life he shrank from them, and suffered agonies of nervousness while he was speechifying. He would clench his hands behind his back so tightly that his nails would lacerate his palms, and would leave the platform in a state of exhaustion. On this afternoon in March his nerves overpowered him. When he was called upon to speak, he rose amidst a cheering crowd which liked his good looks and remembered his honourable ancestors. He advanced to the front of the platform, and the expectant crowd ceased to cheer and prepared to listen. He opened his parched lips, and with difficulty said, " Gentlemen, I am a candidate for the representation of the county of Dublin ! . . ." Then he became silent. He tried again,

faltered, paused, stumbled on, became horribly confused, and finally broke down. Such a conclusion to a speech would have been bad anywhere, but it was appalling in Ireland, where oratory is the principal accomplishment of the majority of the people, and at that time, and perhaps still, was the principal occupation of many. The kindly audience cheered sympathetically, but departed full of doubt. This was not the stuff of which statesmen were made. Even Honest John Martin, who so warmly supported his candidature, must have wondered whether he had done wisely. When the poll was declared, Colonel Taylor was found to have received 2,122 votes, while Parnell received only 1,141, leaving him in a minority of 981. That, it seemed to many, was the end of young Mr. Parnell. He made the worst possible impression both on the electors and on the leaders of his party, one of whom, in London, explained the severe defeat with the words, "And no wonder! If you'd seen the bloody fool we had for a candidate! . . ." The election cost him £2,000. The Home Rule League found £300 towards his expenses, but he generously returned it to them, and bore the whole cost himself. It was during this election that his opponents accused him of dealing harshly with his tenants, but they had mistaken him for his brother, Henry Tudor, the owner of Clonmore in Carlow, who had no sympathy whatever with his elder brother's new politics, and was, and continued for the whole of his life, a Tory.

Parnell remained quiet after this election until the sudden death on March 29, 1875, of Honest John Martin, who was one of the members for Meath. Parnell was adopted as a candidate in opposition to two other candidates—Mr. J. L. Naper, a Tory, and Mr. J. T. Hinds, an independent Home Ruler. The poll was declared on April 19, 1875, and Parnell was at the top of it. He received 1,771 votes, as against 902 for Mr. Naper and 138 for Mr. Hinds. One who heard him

speaking at Navan during this election says the chairman had to lead him off the platform when he finished his speech, as he was completely dazed, apparently unable to find his way down, and his hands were so tightly clenched behind his back that the nails almost cut the palms of his hands.

IV

Five years later, " the bloody fool " had driven Mr. Butt from authority to the grave, and was the master of Ireland. Eleven years later he was master of the House of Commons, with Mr. Gladstone and Lord Salisbury openly or covertly seeking his suffrages. Sixteen years later he was dead.

CHAPTER IV

HIS POLICY OF OBSTRUCTION

I

THE Fenians resembled their modern successors, the Sinn Feiners, in this, among other respects, that they did not believe in Parliamentary action. It was part of their creed that Irish freedom would be won only by means of physical force, and, since it was inconceivable that Ireland would ever be in a position to raise an army which would be capable of defeating England in the field, methods of terrorism would have to be adopted. The Fenians ranged from men of high and noble character such as John O'Leary, to ruffians such as "the Invincibles," to whom patriotism was merely an excuse for gratifying their blood-lust. Fenians like O'Leary would not acknowledge common cut-throats like Brady, the Invincible, as Fenians at all; but they were all members of the physical force party. When we resolve to journey along a road, we cannot limit our companions to those who think and act as we do. The physical force party was numerically small. It flourished in America rather than in Ireland. It had against it the generality of the people, to whom murder does not cease to be murder when it is committed with the best intentions or for propaganda purposes; the Catholic Church; and, of course, the Unionists. The opposition to the Fenians, apart from that of the Unionists, took the form of constitutional agitation. The Irish party, as it was called, believed that Irish freedom could be won by argument in the House of Commons. A modern analogy for the Fenians and the Nationalists could be found in the Women's Social and Political Union, led by the Pankhursts, and the Constitutional Women's Suffrage Societies, led by Mrs. Fawcett.

Mr. Isaac Butt, a benign and eloquent lawyer, with an

unusually expansive manner, was the leader of the constitutional party. He was a very amiable man, who had won the regard, though not the service, of the Fenians by the devotion with which he had defended some of them during periods of persecution. He liked comfort and ease, and was anxious not to upset or disturb anyone. He had a passion, if one can describe his kindly feelings by such a word, for gentlemanly persuasion. It was true that the House of Commons listened to his eloquent periods as if they were part of a treat organised by the kind Government for the tired rank and file of the parties; it was true that no Government, Liberal or Tory, ever thought for a moment of taking Mr. Butt or his colleagues seriously; it was true that there were times when even Mr. Butt himself felt aggrieved at the indifference with which his really magnificent oratory was received; but never should it be charged against him that he had done or said anything that was not entirely nice and gentlemanly.

When some earnest-minded person protested to him that there was indignity in the spectacle of Irishmen vainly asking the English for consideration for their country's troubles, Mr. Butt would open wide his arms and exclaim in his rich, honied, abundant voice, " My dear boy !" as if the earnest-minded and importunate person were the child of his bosom and must immediately be clasped to it. He would remind him of the popularity of the party with some of the most refined persons in England. Their amusing manners and droll conversation and quaint brogues made them very serviceable to hostesses hard up for means of entertaining their guests. When English society had been thoroughly permeated by Irish charm and Irish reasonableness, then, said Mr. Butt, the revolution in Ireland would take place without the effusion of anyone's blood or the fracture of a single friendship. " My dear boy !" Mr. Butt would say benignly, not without a note of reproach in his tone, and the earnest-minded and

importunate person would depart, whatever his own conclusions might be, convinced that the Irish leader was a very nice old gentleman. And, indeed, it was impossible to dislike Mr. Butt. That was his misfortune. Successful leaders are not made out of men who cannot be disliked by anyone. The House of Commons loved Mr. Butt, and laughed at him. It hated Parnell, and obeyed him.

The Fenians had been very active in England and in Ireland for about ten years before Parnell took his seat in the House of Commons on April 22, 1875, and the Government had dealt with them in a swift and severe manner. Many of their leaders were sentenced to long terms of penal servitude. A young man named Michael Davitt, who was born on March 25, 1846, exactly three months before Parnell, had been arrested at Paddington Station soon after Parnell had been sent down from Cambridge. He had £150 in his possession, which, the police alleged, was to have been paid by him to a man named Wilson, arrested with him, who had in his possession fifty revolvers. Davitt was the son of peasants who had emigrated from Mayo, after eviction, to Haslingden, in Lancashire. The record of his life is most pitiful and moving. Hardship dogged him. The young Parnell was reared in wilful luxury: the young Davitt was reared in suffering and hunger. When the young Parnell was fighting with his tutors at Kirk Langley, the young Davitt was earning a few shillings a week in a mill at Baxenden, where one morning, six weeks after he had started to work, he was caught in a machine and so badly injured that one of his arms had to be amputated. Parnell rarely read books, and strenuously resisted all attempts to educate him: Davitt was an inveterate reader, and made gigantic efforts to get himself educated. Parnell had strong sexual impulses: Davitt was unusually chaste. They disliked each other, though their dislike was tempered with respect. One was

an aristocrat from tip to toe: the other was a peasant in his marrow.

Davitt, after a trial manifestly unfair, was sent to prison for fifteen years. That was in July, 1870. His imprisonment began in Millbank—the Tate Gallery now stands on its site—and was continued at Dartmoor, where, in circumstances of exceptional severity, he remained until he was released in December, 1877. The measures taken against the Fenians temporarily eclipsed them, and the constitutional movement momentarily was all that was left of the Irish agitation for self-government. The Tories were in power when Parnell was elected to the Commons, and Disraeli was Prime Minister. The Chief Secretary for Ireland was Sir Michael Hicks-Beach. Ireland seemed unusually quiet, and the Dublin correspondent of *The Times* was able to inform his readers that " at no period of her history did she appear more tranquil, more free from serious crime, more prosperous and contented."[1] Nevertheless, on Parnell's first night in Parliament another of the nearly innumerable Coercion Bills was being discussed.

There were fifty-nine Home Rulers in that Parliament, most of them holding opinions similar to those of Mr. Butt. Two of them, however, dissented from their leader's policy, one cynically, the other violently. Mr. Joseph Ronayne, who had fled to America from Ireland to escape from imprisonment, had returned to his native country with a handsome competence made out of engineering. " He had just been elected for the city of Cork as an old-time patriot who had never compromised with his principles in the long period between the death of O'Connell and the rise of Butt, during which all the political spirit of Ireland had been directed either into the selfish and dishonest pursuit of place and power, or into the wild and terrible

[1] Quoted by Mr. Barry O'Brien in his *Life of Parnell*, vol. i., p. 87.

experiences of revolutionary effort. Honest Joe Ronayne, he used to be called. He was a very sincere, and a very serious, and also towards the end—from ill-health—a rather melancholy man. But like many men of such a temperament, he was very witty. Just before his death his leg had to be amputated. ' I shan't be able to comply with the Standing Orders of the House,' was his comment."[1] This dying man was the originator of the policy of obstruction which was to be perfected by Parnell. He was too ill and, as he said, too old, although he was only fifty-four, to use his own weapon, but he passed it on to the other Home Ruler in the House of Commons who disapproved of Mr. Butt's policy, Mr. Joseph Gillis Biggar, the member for Cavan. Mr. Ronayne and Mr. Biggar agreed that no good would ever accrue to Ireland from the policy of amiable coaxing. Biggar, who had a sort of half-intelligence, realised that Mr. Butt's policy was useless, in which belief Mr. Ronayne joined him, but it was not until the member for Cork told the member for Cavan what to do that Mr. Biggar could get beyond the stage of impotent complaints against his leader. The thing was simple. " The English stop our Bills. Why don't we stop their Bills? That's the thing to do. No Irish Bills; but stop English Bills. No legislation; that's the policy, sir—that's the policy. Butt's a fool—too gentlemanly; we're all too gentlemanly."[2] The Irish party, with the exception of Mr. Biggar, would not listen to Mr. Ronayne. Mr. Butt almost became angry about the proposal. What! sacrifice his reputation for niceness and gentility and good fellowship! Poor Ronayne's health must be worse than they imagined! . . . Mr. Biggar resolved to practise what Mr. Ronayne

[1] *Life of Charles Stewart Parnell,* by T. P. O'Connor, M.P., p. 39.

[2] *Life of Charles Stewart Parnell,* by R. Barry O'Brien, vol. i., p. 92.

preached. It was on the night of Parnell's first appearance in the House of Commons that Mr. Biggar made his first effort at obstruction.

II

Joseph Gillis Biggar was, perhaps, the most remarkable member of the Home Rule Party. He was a Presbyterian of Scottish descent, and was born in Belfast in August, 1828. He was generally referred to as a pork-butcher or curer by members of Parliament, who were snobbish enough to imagine that a man of that occupation must be devoid of governing ability or even intelligence. It is true that part of his income was derived from the curing of pork, but it is not true that Biggar was an ignorant and ill-bred hobbledehoy. His family had been settled in Belfast for two centuries when he was born—they came originally from Dumfries—and were people of property, owning large lands in Mallusk and Biggerstown. Biggar's father—their name is sometimes spelt Bigger—was a banker, a big, bulky man, weighing twenty-two stone, and possessed of an uncommon thirst, which enabled him to drink down "half-yins" of whisky without visible discomfort. Joseph Gillis Biggar was a rough, ugly-looking man—Mr. Barry O'Brien describes him as "uncouth and brutal," and Mr. T. P. O'Connor as "a peculiarly aggravating obstructive"—who might fairly have been given the nickname of Caliban, except for the fact that he had pleasant, humorous eyes. Disraeli, when he saw Biggar for the first time, regarded him through his eyeglass, and said, "Is he a *leprechaun*?" The remark was provoked by deformity, for Biggar, when he was thirteen or fourteen years of age, was thrown from the back of a pony and sustained a spinal injury which left him, for the rest of his life, with a curvature of the back. It was frequently said of him that he was uneducated,

or that he received the paltry education that was then given in national schools, but the facts are otherwise. He *was* a badly educated man, but the accident which made a hunchback of him was responsible for the deficiency in his knowledge. He spent twelve years at the Belfast Royal Academy, which was then the premier school in Belfast, and was tutored by men of considerable local distinction. In 1877, after listening to a fervid sermon preached by a Dominican priest, Father Tom Burke, at the chapel in Kirkcubbin, he decided to join the Roman Catholic Church, into which he was shortly afterwards received.[1] His business ability was considerable, and he made a fortune out of pigs. How this Presbyterian became infected with Nationalist politics to the extent of consorting habitually with Papists is hard to say, but his morals, which were as uncouth as his looks, were not such as would be considered commendable either in Geneva or in Rome. He was an avowed and unashamed sinner. In 1883 an Irish lady, Miss Fanny Hyland, living in Paris sued him for breach of promise, and succeeded in mulcting him in damages to the extent of £400. It is clear from the evidence that Mr. Biggar desired the lady for his concubine, but that she preferred to be his wife. As she was getting on in years, she rightly considered that she would be safer married to him than she would be kept by him. Quite casually, in the course of his cross-examination, Mr. Biggar informed the court that he was the father of two natural children, a boy and a girl, each by a different mother. He frequently corresponded with the mother of one of these children, but could not say for certain whether the mother of the second was alive or dead ! He was especially fond of barmaids, and had, it appeared, a strong desire to beget children by them.

A stronger contrast to Parnell than Joseph Biggar could

[1] See an account of him by his kinsman, Francis Joseph Bigger, M.R.I.A., published in the *Belfast Telegraph* on February 24, 1926.

not have been imagined. The ugly and misshapen pork-curer seemed more like Caliban than ever when he stood by the side of the tall, slim, handsome, well-dressed young aristocrat from Wicklow, who instantly suggested Ferdinand to the mind. Parnell shyly sat down on the Irish benches and listened to Biggar's speech. Mr. Butt wanted the Coercion Bill delayed, so he instructed Biggar to talk at large about it. Biggar, so different from Parnell in all else, resembled him in two things: he was badly educated and he hated making speeches. But this order from Butt was welcome to him, for it enabled him to put into practice the idea which Mr. Ronayne had planted in his mind. He spoke for three hours and fifty-five minutes, and contrived, according to Mr. O'Connor, who heard the speech, to drag into the discussion on Coercion a denunciation of Ritualism, which might have been regarded by some of his colleagues as a backhander at Popery itself. He read lengthy extracts from Blue Books until his voice became so tired that the Speaker, hoping to shut him up, complained of being unable to hear him. Mr. Biggar, affecting the utmost concern for the Speaker, declared that they were too far away from each other, and immediately moved from his place to one nearer the Chair, where he resumed his reading of the Blue Books. The exasperated House could do nothing with Mr. Biggar, and had to bear with what fortitude it could his deliberate waste of its time. His colleagues, jealous of their reputation for gentlemanly, reasonable behaviour, were shocked by his conduct—all of them, except Mr. Ronayne and the young member for Meath, who had taken his seat that afternoon. Parnell listened to Mr. Biggar as if he were listening to the voice of God. . . . He did not make any sign to show that he had resolved on the policy of obstruction which Biggar was now so clumsily practising. He had yet to learn his way about this singular House. But the idea of obstruction was

moving uneasily in his thoughts, and it was expressed at first in shy suggestions to older members which must have made some of them regard him as a madman. Mr. T. P. O'Connor says in his *Life of Charles Stewart Parnell*: "I have heard O'Connor Power tell the story of an extraordinary project which Parnell imparted to him a short time after his entrance into Parliament. It was to come down to the House some night in fantastic costume, to provoke a collision with the Speaker, and by some such means to draw attention to the grievances of Ireland."

Four days after his introduction to the Speaker he made his maiden speech. "It was short, modest, spoken in a thin voice and with manifest nervousness." He declared that Ireland was not a geographical fragment of England, but a nation. For the rest of the year 1875 he remained mostly an onlooker, though he spoke at intervals and asked questions. Mr. Barry O'Brien has culled two short passages from speeches which he delivered in Ireland about this time. "We do not want speakers in the House of Commons, but men who will vote right." "The Irish people should watch the conduct of their representatives in the House of Commons." He was evolving the form and discipline of his party. He had told his brother in America that "the Irish can make themselves felt everywhere if they are self-reliant and stick to each other," and now he was announcing the need for a well-governed voting machine. There is something astounding in the spectacle of this stammering and singularly uninformed young man, who knew so little of Parliamentary procedure or, indeed, of the ordinary routine of life that he naively enquired of a colleague how one got the material for a question to the Speaker, finding in flashes of intuition the means whereby the dreams and desires of generations of Irishmen were to be fulfilled. One imagines the amused scorn with which his colleague informed him that one got the material for questions

" from the newspapers, from our constituents, from many sources," and heard him reply, " Ah, I must try and ask a question myself one day." Yet this simpleton, as he seemed, was to acquire a dominion over that man and his comrades within five years such as no other man in the political history of Great Britain and Ireland has ever possessed. For his was the simplicity of the man of genius, the simplicity which cannot be put to shame. It has been said of him by many persons that he had no original ideas. Mr. John Morley, describing him, said: " Of constructive faculty he never showed a trace. He was a man of temperament, of will, of authority, of power; not of ideas or ideals, or knowledge, or political maxims, or even of practical reason in its higher senses, as Hamilton, Madison, or Jefferson had practical reason. But he knew what he wanted."[1] He knew more than that—he knew what he wanted, and he knew how to get it. He did not invent his methods, but he had the ability to recognise a useful method the moment he saw it. He was rarely indecisive. We shall see later how, when *The Times* attempted to implicate him in the Phœnix Park murders, he startled and even outraged his friends by pointing to the S in his signature and saying, " I did not make an S like that since 1878 !" That, seemingly, was all he had to say when accused of complicity in a horrible assassination, and there were many who were shocked by what they considered a mad triviality. Yet that S was the marrow of the matter, and Parnell, with his uncanny power of seizing upon the essential fact, did not waste time in displays of indignation when his business was to discover who had copied his 1878 S, and by what means he had acquired the original of it. Discoverers seldom use, or make the best use of, their discoveries. If the effective use of obstruction had depended upon Joseph Ronayne, there would not have been any obstruction. The

[1] *Life of Gladstone*, bk. ix., chap. v., sect. 3.

weapon would have rusted into ruin. It is, indeed, a nice point to decide which of the two is the greater, the man who thinks of the way in which to do things or the man who does them; but we may safely conclude that the inventor and the exploiter are necessary to each other, since the one without the other would be useless.

Parnell, then, in his first Parliamentary session, during which he was disregarded by his colleagues, some of whom thought him half-witted, was creating in his mind the basis and the shape of the political machine which he was to drive with unprecedented vigour and success.

It was not until June 30, 1876, that he said anything in the House of Commons which drew public attention to himself. Sir Michael Hicks-Beach, the Chief Secretary for Ireland, speaking on Mr. Butt's motion for an enquiry into the demand for Home Rule, referred to "The Manchester Martyrs" as "the Manchester murderers." It was probably an uncalculated description, but it had an immediate and infuriating effect on one member of the House. Parnell, whose sole political argument at the County Dublin by-election seemed to be concerned with the execution of Allen, Larkin, and O'Brien, startled a somnolent assembly by shouting in sharp accents, "No! no!" Black Michael glanced about him in astonishment, and then, fixing his gaze upon the young nervous Nationalist, icily said, "I regret to hear that there is an honourable member in this House who will apologise for murder." Cries of "Withdraw! Withdraw!" were addressed to Parnell by indignant members in every part of the Commons, and men looked to see if the foolish interrupter were now dismayed by the just wrath he had drawn down upon himself. But the member for Meath was not dismayed, neither was he overpowered by the beetling brows of Black Michael. He rose in his place, and said, deliberately and with dignity, "The right honourable gentle-

man looked at me so directly when he said that he regretted that any member of the House should apologise for murder that I wish to say as publicly as I can that I do not believe, and never shall believe, that any murder was committed at Manchester." The embarrassment was felt, not by Parnell, but by Sir Michael, who hummed and hawed for a moment or two, and then hurriedly addressed himself to the motion. Parnell's reply was heard by Irishmen all over the world, and Fenians, who had long abandoned hope of any good coming from the activities of Mr. Butt, found themselves considering his latest recruit with curious interest.

In October of that year, 1876, he and Mr. O'Connor Power were sent to America to present an address to President Grant, congratulating the American people on the centenary of American Independence. Mrs. Parnell, her daughter Fanny, and her son John, were then living at the Fifth Avenue Hotel in New York, and John records the annoyance which his imperious brother felt when the President, for diplomatic reasons, declined to receive the address except through the British Embassy at Washington. He called Grant " a vulgar old dog."[1] His anti-English feelings were now unchecked. His proud nature was wounded by the indifference with which his party was treated in Parliament, and the wound rankled. To find himself directed to ask the British Ambassador to present an Irish address to the American President was galling to one who had already been sufficiently galled by his party's position of inferiority. His angry outburst against Grant was not so much an outburst against him as an outburst against the humiliation of his people. The address was ultimately accepted by the Legislative Assembly without reference to the President, but Parnell had returned to England before this was done. The incident was another

[1] *Charles Stewart Parnell,* by his brother, John Howard Parnell, p. 146.

of the small things which roused his wrath far beyond its worth, but it was of such small things as this that he built his antipathy to England.

By the end of 1876, says Mr. Barry O'Brien, Parnell realised that Mr. Butt's movement was a complete failure. The Irish party had introduced Bill after Bill into the House of Commons, but between 1871 and 1876 only one of them, the Municipal Privileges Bill, " which enabled municipal corporations to confer the freedom of their cities and to appoint sheriffs," became an Act of Parliament. The party was mainly composed of comfortable, genial gentlemen, to whom the House of Commons was the gateway to an agreeable social life in England. It was also the gateway to a good job. When Parnell surveyed the Irish party, and saw how the pleasant entertainments given to the Irish members by English people reconciled them to scurvy treatment in the Commons, he resolved that there would be no social intercourse between the members of *his* party and the enemy. The fight could only be won on strict terms of warfare. There must be no fraternising between the forces. He knew too well how easily the Irish could be seduced from the stern work of achieving self-government by pretty flatteries from amiable English hosts and hostesses. What man, having dined in his neighbour's house, could consent to struggle with him in the street ? Parnell has been accused of unsociability by persons who knew little of him—for he was not an unsociable man in his own place—but that unsociability in England was part of his policy, deliberately devised by him because he had seen Mr. Butt's party ruined by too much affability. He had now arranged in his mind what was to be the basis and the shape of his party. He had next to remove Mr. Butt from his path. That proved to be a comparatively easy task, easy because Mr. Butt ingenuously assisted at his own removal.

But he had a greater feat to perform than that of getting

rid of Mr. Butt. The cardinal point in his policy was that there should be unity among Irishmen. His great labour would be to achieve that unity. It would not be possible to unify *all* Irishmen—the Unionists, for example, could hardly be expected to join with their enemies, the Nationalists —but he must somehow unite in one party all the Irishmen who believed in self-government for Ireland. The task sounds easy, but few tasks are easy in Ireland, and this task was one of the most difficult that Parnell had to perform. There were three groups of Irishmen demanding self-government who had to be fused into one group: the Constitutional Nationalists, the Fenians, and the Church. The second were condemned by the third because they belonged to a secret society. The first were condemned by the second because they compromised with the extreme principles of physical force. The possibility of unifying these three groups must have seemed very remote in 1876, but Parnell, though he never achieved the unity which he desired, did at least persuade the dissentients from his policy to stand by as neutrals until he had proved or disproved his power to do what he had set out to do. The normal difficulty of reconciling these groups to each other was increased, first, by the fact that the Fenians had now lost all faith in Mr. Butt, and, consequently, in the constitutional movement; and, second, by the fact that Parnell was a Protestant land-owner. Would the Church of Rome allow a synodsman of the Church of Ireland to lead its Bishops, priests, and laity? At that moment, had Parnell revealed his mind to any of his colleagues, they must surely have imagined that he was mad. He had all the disabilities that a man could have for such a task, down to his very accent, which was English. An Irishman with an English accent meant, in Ireland, a man who belonged to the ascendancy, and was rigidly opposed to self-government for Ireland. How could this Episcopalian of thirty, with his stuttering English

voice, hope, if he were sane, that he would be the means of unifying elements which met only to fly violently apart?

But to unify those elements was his aim, and he began the process of unification by joining forces with Joseph Biggar in a business which seemed, at first, to achieve exactly the opposite of that at which they aimed. They became Ishmaels in their own party. Ferdinand and Caliban made a pact with each other. "If we are to have Parliamentary action," said Parnell, "it must not be the action of conciliation, but of retaliation." And in 1877 they started to obstruct.

III

It must seem to the reader that an extraordinary amount of fuss was made in England over the policy of obstruction. All that rage and emotion about so small a thing! But the House of Commons was proud of its reputation as the mother of Parliaments, and members loved, in their more epigrammatic moments, to tell each other that it was the best club in the world. Nowadays, old gentlemen, when they retire from active labour, devote the fag-end of their energies and intellects to golf, but in those days they devoted them to the government of their country. Old gentlemen like order and seemliness and regular ways. They love rules and regulations, and when there are none, they make some. Suddenly, and seemingly for no reason, two unimportant members of this sedate assembly began to upset things; and old gentlemen who were accustomed to going home to bed at midnight found themselves compelled to tramp wearily through the division lobbies until four and five in the morning! They had not even the solace of sleep, for the divisions came almost on top of each other. And who, pray, were the culprits who caused this commotion? Two men in an assembly of nearly seven hundred. They were not only members of a despised

minority, but were actually a despised minority within that despised minority. One of them suffered badly from an excess of nerves: the other suffered badly from a lack of nerves. One of them was a gentleman, of course, but the other—good God !—was a pork-butcher, a fellow who cured pigs ! Both of them were amazingly ignorant and even uneducated: the elder, so it was said, but wrongly, had been to a national school in Belfast, and the younger had been to Cambridge. Neither of them was liked. Biggar was totally lacking in charm or graciousness of manner, and he had a Belfast accent which was exasperating in itself. People with Oxford voices were almost maddened by the sound of what Biggar said, apart altogether from the provocation they received from his uncouth sentences. Parnell was not much better, despite the fact that his accent resembled that of most of the members. Mr. Henry Lucy wrote of him: "Mr. Parnell is always at a white heat of rage, and makes, with savage earnestness, fancifully ridiculous statements, such as you may hear from your partner in a quadrille, if you have the good fortune to be a guest at the annual ball at Colney Hatch. The writer, who cherishes a real affection for Ireland, and who has an unaffected admiration for the genius of her sons, bitterly reproaches Meath that it should have wronged Ireland by making such scenes possible under the eye of the House. . . . Mr. Biggar, though occasionally endurable, is invariably grotesque. . . . But Mr. Parnell has no redeeming qualities, unless we regard it as an advantage to have in the House a man who unites in his own person all the childish unreasonableness, all the ill-regulated suspicion, and all the childish credulity of the Irish peasant, without any of the humour, the courtliness, or dash of the Irish gentleman."[1]

How warrantable that rebuke must have seemed then, especially to those who had listened to Mr. Parnell almost

[1] *The World*, March 29, 1876.

screaming his speeches at them. Mr. Lucy must have seemed to be absurdly restraining himself. Parnell *did* scream like an hysterical woman; Biggar *did* behave like a demented footpad. Yet there must have been many times after those words were written in *The World* when their author caught himself wondering whether it was not he, and those who agreed with him, who were mad then. But if wisdom were as abundant before events as it is after them, there would rarely be events. And the great anger which swept through the House of Commons and through Great Britain against these obstructionists who had no consideration for the dignity of Parliament seemed well justified to those who felt it. Part of the anger was due to astonishment at any provocation coming from the amiable Mr. Butt's party. Members felt much as if a pet lamb had suddenly taken a piece out of the leg of its kind master. Mr. Butt, they said, ought to keep his two ruffians in order. . . . Unfortunately for the peace and comfort of the House of Commons, Mr. Butt was not able to keep Parnell and Biggar in order. They, on the contrary, were able to persuade some of their colleagues to join them in the game of obstruction. Parnell immediately became the leader of them. "How," Mr. Barry O'Brien asked one of the unruly band—"how came Parnell to lead you in all these fights? He was not an able speaker; he was deficient in intellectual gifts, which many of you possessed; he had little Parliamentary experience." "By tenacity," was the answer. "Sheer tenacity. He stuck on when the rest of us gave way."[1] The obstructionists, exploiting with skill the rules of the House, soon had the Government in difficulties. Parnell and his followers, always professing, sometimes sincerely, a desire to improve Bills or to have them adequately discussed, would offer to withdraw amendments or resolutions if the Government

[1] *Life of Charles Stewart Parnell*, by R. Barry O'Brien, vol. i., p. 108.

would only behave reasonably. These offers at magnanimity were even more enraging to the rest of the assembly than the bare, bald obstruction.

Their methods were simple. When a Bill was introduced into the House by the Government, the obstructionists immediately loaded the Orders with pages of amendments, all of which were lengthily discussed. Mr. Biggar would rise to say that he did not agree with his honourable friend, the member for Meath, or Mr. Parnell would suggest to his honourable friend, the member for Cavan, that perhaps he could discuss the important point he had raised on an amendment which stood in his, Mr. Parnell's, name a little lower down on the paper. Mr. Biggar would then magnificently acknowledge that his honourable friend's reasoning had convinced him or that it had not convinced him, in which latter case he felt himself compelled to deliver another lengthy speech explaining just why he had not been convinced. This explanation would sometimes compel Mr. Parnell to get up a second time and explain why Mr. Biggar ought to have been convinced, and endeavour once more to make him change his opinion! . . . There was a member of the Government, Mr. Gathorne-Hardy, afterwards Lord Cranbrook, who was notoriously testy-tempered. With the utmost gravity, and even a show of deference, Mr. Parnell and Mr. Biggar would induce this gentleman to explode with wrath. They worked on the poor man's temper on the night of April 12, 1877, during a discussion on the Mutiny Bill, until it was in shreds. Scene followed scene, with Mr. Gathorne-Hardy barking furiously at his tormentors or sulkily refusing to say another word to them until at last he could endure their suave enquiries no longer, and was barking furiously at them again! . . . Some scandalised Irish members, resentful against their mutinous colleagues because they were disturbing the harmony of the best club

in the world, rushed into the smoking-room, where the benign Mr. Butt was quietly reposing. They shocked him with their news, and at last, yielding to appeals from them and from English members, he rushed, like a flustered hen who discovers indisciplined ducks in her hatch, into the Chamber, where, immediately he caught the Speaker's eye, he denounced the member for Meath. "I regret," he said in angry and impassioned tones, "that the time of the House has been wasted in this miserable and wretched discussion. If at this hour of the night any member really wished to propose a serious amendment, I would support the motion to 'report progress,' and so also, I think, would the Secretary for War." One can see the agitated Mr. Gathorne-Hardy, now promised some deliverance from his tormentors, eagerly nodding his agreement with Mr. Butt, and hear hearty "Hear, hears" bursting from his lips and those of his supporters. "But," continued the Irish leader, "when there was no amendment to a number of clauses, I must express my disapproval of the course taken by the honourable member for Meath. It is a course of obstruction, and one against which I must enter my protest. I am not responsible for the member for Meath, and cannot control him. I have, however, a duty to discharge to the great nation of Ireland, and I think I should discharge it best when I say I disapprove entirely of the conduct of the honourable member for Meath."

Loud cheers rang about his ears as he sat down. But the cheers were not Irish cheers: they were English. Mr. Gathorne-Hardy, now less agitated than he had been, mopped his moist forehead, and concluded that there would be no more trouble from *that* quarter. The House prepared to pass in block the whole of the challenged clauses and then to go home. But Mr. Parnell had still something to say. He rose very quietly, and said a single sentence: "The honourable and learned gentleman was not in the House when I attempted

to explain why I had not put down notice of my amendments." That was all, but it was enough. In that moment Mr. Butt's career as leader of the Irish party was ended. He was to drag on, pathetically and dismally, for two years after this, but on that night in April, 1877, he destroyed himself, so far as the Irish people were concerned, as surely as if he had gone over to the Unionists. *He had rebuked an Irishman in the House of Commons for conduct which he had not witnessed, although that conduct was intended to make Englishmen treat Irish affairs with greater respect.* The Fenians, who had raised their heads when they heard Parnell passionately protesting that "The Manchester Martyrs" were not murderers, now moved nearer to him so that they might hear better.

Parnell did not content himself with his single-sentence speech in the House. He formally wrote to Mr. Butt complaining of his behaviour in rebuking him, and the tottering leader replied to him. Finally, the correspondence was published in the *Freeman's Journal* in Dublin. It made an impression adverse to Mr. Butt on those who read it, for Mr. Butt was resolved to go on his dear old gentlemanly way, and insisted that Parnell should accompany him. But Parnell politely refused. From this time on, Parnell openly strove to depose Mr. Butt from his position.

IV

One night an Irishman, named J. A. Blake, saw Parnell in the House of Commons, and was impressed by his appearance. He turned to Mr. Butt and said, "That young man will be the death of you!" "Nonsense," said Mr. Butt, who had not yet committed his great mistake and was still strongly supported by his countrymen; "I can drive him out of public life with a word." In this way men speak before they fall. The consumptive is most certain of his recovery when he is on the point of death.

V

The policy of obstruction was continued with unabated vigour, despite the displeasure of Mr. Butt. The newspapers were full of the subject, and in Ireland people began anew to take interest in politics. The Irish party, hitherto disregarded and derided, was now impressing itself upon English politics. It had even achieved some useful results, despite its determination mainly to obstruct the business of the Commons, and had sensibly and humanely mitigated the rigours of flogging in the army and navy and the treatment of political offenders in prison. The name of Parnell was frequently and favourably mentioned wherever Irishmen met to talk about public affairs, and the Fenians, who hoped for nothing from the constitutional movement, began to wish that they might enrol this young man in their society. In the meantime, Parnell was quietly undermining Mr. Butt's position. He needed a platform, and one was found for him by the Home Rule Confederation of Great Britain, a body which was governed by Fenians. His first public advances towards the leadership were made in England and Scotland. He did not advance upon the Irish position until he had dug himself in among the Irish in England. Thirteen meetings were arranged for him to address by a member of the supreme council of the Irish Republican Brotherhood, who expected Parnell to be pleased when told of the arrangements. But Parnell's face fell when he heard the number of them. "Thirteen meetings," said he, with a most lugubrious look; "you will have to knock one off or put one on. Don't you know thirteen is a most unlucky number?" Matters were satisfactorily arranged, and he established his platform in England.

Then he returned to the House of Commons, where the policy of obstruction was carried to a further stage. On

July 2, 1877, Parnell and four of his followers kept the House up until seven in the morning. On July 25, during the debate on the South African Bill to annex the Transvaal, he threw the whole House into a wild rage, during which he himself spoke almost in a shriek, saying that " as an Irishman, coming from a country that had experienced to its fullest extent the results of English interference in its affairs and the consequences of English cruelty and tyranny, I feel a special satisfaction in preventing and thwarting the intentions of the Government in respect of this Bill." Sir Stafford Northcote, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, listening too incautiously, immediately rose and moved that " the words of the honourable member be taken down." The Speaker was sent for, and when he arrived, Sir Stafford moved " that the honourable member for Meath be suspended from his functions of speaking and taking part in the debates of the House until Friday next," because he had declared his satisfaction in preventing and thwarting the intentions *of the House of Commons*. Parnell was called upon to explain his words, and he replied by further defiance of the *Government*, and was called to order by the Speaker. He then retired to the public galleries, while the delighted House, feeling that the wily obstructionist had at last slipped, settled down to a comfortable night. But in a few moments the triumphant Chancellor became a discomfited Chancellor. It was he who had slipped, not Parnell. The member for Meath had *not* declared his intention of thwarting the House of Commons, but of thwarting the Government, which was part of the normal purpose of every member of the Opposition. Mr. Gathorne-Hardy, who had suffered so severely from the obstructionists a few months earlier, hurried to the assistance of his floundering colleague and pulled him out of his mess. There was no more talk of suspension, and Parnell, escorted by Biggar, returned to his place on the floor of the House,

where he resumed his speech on the South African Bill as if nothing had occurred.

The Government could not be expected to endure this sniping for ever, and so Sir Stafford Northcote proposed two new rules to deal with obstruction, which were passed; but four days after they were passed the House witnessed the worst scene of obstruction in its history. The South African Bill was again under discussion, and the Government, in their determination to pass their Bill and thwart the obstructionists, arranged to divide their followers into groups, each group being told off to attend at the House during certain hours of the day and night. The struggle began at five o'clock on Tuesday evening, July 31, 1877, Mr. F. H. O'Donnell, who had been elected for Dungarvan in the previous January, starting the attack. There were seven Irishmen doing battle against almost the entire House of Commons, including their own official leader, Mr. Butt, who publicly denied that they were Irishmen, and asserted that if this sort of thing were to continue he would retire from politics as from "a vulgar brawl." The fight continued through the night. One batch of Government supporters relieved another; one chairman of committee was relieved by a deputy; and so through the night the hosts were spared from fatigue while the valiant seven strove without ceasing. They kept a strict control over themselves, nor were they ever caught tripping over points of order. An unhappy chairman of committee put himself out of order by a ruling antagonistic to the seven, which they immediately challenged. The chairman withdrew it, murmuring "I beg your pardon," to the grief and sorrow of the House. At a quarter past eight in the morning, when he had been incessantly struggling with the Government's battalions for fifteen hours, Parnell, worn out and looking terribly old, took his turn of rest. Four hours later, at a quarter past twelve, he was back in his

place, and thenceforward until the last division was taken he did not leave the Chamber. When the sitting ended, the House had been engaged for twenty-six continuous hours in a struggle with seven Irishmen. For twenty-two of those hours Parnell had done his share of battling. And up in the Ladies' Gallery Miss Fanny Parnell, fiercely affectionate, sat for the whole of the sitting, watching her brother and his friends pulling the lion's tail. It had been better for England had the contentious seven succeeded in obstructing the South African Bill, for out of that measure came the Zulu War, and the disasters of Isandula and the Intombi River, and the miseries of Majuba and the Boer War.

That night's work roused the wrath of England against Parnell, but it also roused the love of Ireland for him; and when he and Biggar went to Dublin soon after the twenty-six hours' sitting took place, they were received with immense fervour. Poor Mr. Butt, now thoroughly embarrassed by his unruly followers, and suffering from ill-health and financial anxiety—he was immersed in debt—found himself slipping from his position as leader. In the following September the Home Rule Confederation of Great Britain held their annual meeting at Liverpool. Mr. Butt was their President, and expected to be re-elected. Although his policy was now discredited among the members of the Confederation, he himself was popular with them, and he had good grounds for expecting to be re-elected. But Parnell had told the discontented ones that "something striking must be done," and they left him knowing well that the "something striking" must be the deposition of Mr. Butt and the election of Parnell. The first item on the agenda at Liverpool was the election of the President. Parnell was at once proposed and seconded, and elected. Mr. Butt's name was not even mentioned, nor was there any other candidate named. Mr. Butt rose and went away, half-stunned by the blow. Someone spoke to

him, and he turned, with tears in his eyes, and said, "I never thought the Irish in England would do this to me!" Then he hurried off to Dublin, where the debts he had incurred because he had neglected his practice at the Bar to lead his countrymen at Westminster were surging up about him and threatening to overwhelm him. As the old, distressed, and defeated man passed out of the hall, Parnell sat like a stone in the old man's seat.

The English Fenians were now ranged behind him. Theoretically, they still denounced constitutionalism, but practically they were giving Parnell a chance to prove what could be done with it. Mr. Butt had practised tea-party politics: Parnell was practising the politics of fighting men. They tried hard to make a Fenian of him, but he stoutly resisted their blandishments. From the first moment of his political career until the last he was opposed to violence and physical force, and no man could be a Fenian who was opposed to these methods. He would not join the Fenians, but he intended to use them for his purpose; and he did use them, and he achieved his purpose, which was to become indisputably the leader of his party. Naturally, there was conflict in the party itself. The lovers of ease disliked the lovers of war. Mr. Butt still had followers in the Parliamentary party, and these made known their feelings about the young usurper. A conference was called in Dublin in the October following Parnell's election in Butt's place to the presidency of the English Home Rule Confederation. Mr. Butt impassionately denounced the policy of obstruction, and made special and hostile references to Parnell, who briefly and unimpassionately replied, defending himself. The conference ended inconclusively, except that Parnell was stronger than when it began.

In the following December Michael Davitt, having served seven years and seven months of his ferocious sentence of fifteen

years' penal servitude, was released from Dartmoor Prison, together with three other Fenians—Sergeant McCarthy, Corporal Chambers, and John P. O'Brien. They journeyed to Ireland on January 5, 1878, and were met at Kingstown by Parnell and some of his friends. Crowds cheered them at Westland Row, Dublin, and cheered, too, for Parnell, who took them off to breakfast at Morrison's Hotel. As they entered the room, Sergeant McCarthy staggered and turned faint. He was laid on a sofa, where a few moments later he died. Parnell, to whom death was very terrifying, was deeply moved by this unfortunate man's collapse. He could see the marks of suffering on the faces of Davitt and Chambers and O'Brien. The dead body of McCarthy lay before him. These men were Fenians, pledged to a policy which Parnell instinctively detested, but they had endured hardship and imprisonment for their country, and he was the friend of all those who suffered for Ireland. Whatever decisions he had made before that morning were intensified by McCarthy's corpse.

VI

The breach between him and Mr. Butt was rapidly widening, and on January 14 and 15, 1878, another conference was held in Dublin to devise a way of reconciling them. It was a failure, and Mr. Butt, nominally the leader, was practically put aside. In Parliament, Parnell behaved almost as if he were already the leader, and the English people, though they still detested him, now regarded him as a man of extraordinary ability. If only he would behave reasonably, there was no position to which he might not climb! Mr. Henry Lucy no longer wrote of him as if he were a half-wit, shrieking blasphemies in a sacred assembly. He was now, according to the leader writers, a master of tactics, a most able Parliamentarian. Mr. Butt, growing feebler in health, pathetic-

ally denounced obstruction wherever he went, but, finding no sympathy for his more amiable methods, announced his resignation from the leadership. He was persuaded to withdraw it, but not to bridge the gap between himself and Parnell, who now made his first great advance on the Irish position. He addressed a land meeting in Tralee in November, 1878, urging the establishment of rent courts and a peasant proprietary. "It will take an earthquake to settle the land question," someone said to him. "Then we must have an earthquake," he replied.

While he was storming Ireland, Michael Davitt was in America storming the Fenians, preparing for what was afterwards called "the new departure": the recognition of the land question as an integral part of the national question. Davitt, in every fibre of him, was a peasant, with a peasant's longing for land. Parnell, in every fibre of him, was an aristocrat, with an aristocrat's longing for authority. Sooner or later these two were bound to collide, but now they were in the positions in which one expects to find an aristocrat and a peasant: Parnell was leading Davitt, and Davitt devotedly served Parnell in America. In face of enormous difficulties he persuaded the American Fenians, who were more doctrinaire in their beliefs than the Irish and English Fenians, because, no doubt, they were farther away from Ireland, to let Parnell have his chance with constitutionalism. Not all of them were persuaded, but the majority were, and Mr. John Devoy was sent to see Parnell and come to terms with him. Mr. Devoy came, and went back again to America. He talked on two occasions to Parnell, who listened but hardly spoke. But when Mr. Devoy returned to America, he did so determined to work for "the new departure" and to help Parnell.

Meantime, Mr. Butt was dying. His memory was alarmingly erratic, and he had strange sensations in his heart and difficulty in his breathing. He would lie in bed sometimes,

totally unable to remember where he was or how he came to be there. Part of his machinery was running down more rapidly than the rest, and the result of this unequal collapse bewildered and frightened him. But he rallied sufficiently to be able to attend a public meeting in the Leinster Lecture Hall in Dublin on February 5, 1879, where he came into conflict with Parnell for the last time. As he entered the hall, some who had been his friends, reluctant, perhaps, to face the old man now that they were no longer on his side, turned away. He went pathetically to them, holding out his hand, and said, "Won't you speak to me?" His face was very wan, and marked by the signs of approaching death, but he retained enough vigour to make a fine defence of his policy of polite persuasion, and when he left the hall, he did so with the satisfaction of having won a victory over Parnell by eight votes. Happy and once more full of amiability, he went home, persuaded, perhaps, that his victory was important. He did not appear again on any platforms. Disease and debt and mental disorder rapidly overpowered him, and on May 13, 1879, he died. He gave his life and fortune to the Irish, but when there was a proposal to raise a sum of money to alleviate his distress at the end of his life, they did not remember him. Parnell seems to have heard of his death without compunction, and to have talked of the last miseries without any signs of emotion. "I confess," says Mr. T. P. O'Connor, "that Parnell seemed to tell the tragic story of the dark and sad end of a once great Irishman with a frigidity that chilled and almost shocked me."[1] But that indifference may have hidden a deep disquiet. What man, fearing death as Parnell feared it, and haunted by the spectre of madness, could speak otherwise than coldly of the mental and physical collapse of his leader? For to speak coldly was to keep perturbing thoughts at a distance from his mind.

[1] *Life of Charles Stewart Parnell*, by T. P. O'Connor, p. 59.

CHAPTER V

HE BECOMES LEADER OF THE IRISH PARTY

I

THE leadership of the Irish party was now in sight, but not actually in his possession. Butt died in May, 1879, but it was not until May, 1880, that his successor was elected. Between those two times much that was important happened. The West of Ireland, the beautiful but barren province of Connaught, experienced once more the pangs of hunger. The potato crop failed. It had been small in 1877, small in 1878, and now in 1879 it had descended almost to the level of the crop in the great famine year of 1846. Parnell, never deeply acquainted with the land question, found himself confronted with the direst problem of all that are in Ireland: how to make life tolerable in an impoverished province for a people who are deeply attached to the soil on which they were born, and not easily to be moved from it, though too many of them are there. His mind was on government, but he quickly perceived that there could be no government while this matter remained unattended. The passionate peasant, Michael Davitt, left him in no doubt about the importance of the question. Hitherto, he had felt as the Fenians felt, that all else was subordinate to the gaining of self-government; but Davitt, who was a practical visionary, despite the fact that he was generally regarded as a crank, made Parnell realise that none were so visionary as those who expected men in a state of chronic malnutrition to work themselves into a state of ecstasy about abstract ideas. What did it matter to the Mayo man whether he was governed from Westminster or from College Green, when his holding was uneconomic and his belly was pinched with hunger? In that moist air, on that barren soil, there was no time for discussion of high

thoughts, since all of a man's energies were spent in winning food from the penurious earth. He might bend his back to the shape of a hoop, distil his blood into drops of sweat, perceive his ill-fed children drop into a decline while he himself became consumptive, but what profit he made went to his landlord, leaving him the poor potatoes. This is a misery that men will not long continue to endure. The peasant is long-suffering and slow to wrath, nor can he be persuaded to revolt against his conditions until they have become unendurable. Revolutions occur when peasants can bear no more.

Michael Davitt, brooding in Dartmoor, came to the belief that the common demand for the three F's—Fair Rent, Free Sale, and Fixity of Tenure—were not enough, despite the fact that they were more than the English Parliament seemed likely to grant. The peasant was penalised by his own industry. If he improved his land, his rent was raised; and if he refused or was unable to pay the increased rent, he was summarily ejected from his holding, and his improvements were confiscated by his landlord without a penny of compensation. There have been hard and cruel things done in Ireland in our own time, but we will do well to remember that hard and cruel things were done in times past which made these modern cruelties inevitable. When an aristocracy abandons its obligations and drives a peasantry to the end of its endurance, hard things will happen, and it ill becomes those who had the authority, but misused it, to complain of the results of their own acts. Davitt demanded the nationalisation of land, but was prepared to accept peasant proprietorship. He believed that the problem of the land would not be satisfactorily solved until the State owned every inch of the country, but his instincts, inherited from generations of peasant farmers, compelled him to acknowledge that State ownership of land, if it ever came at all, must first be preceded by peasant proprietorship. The desire to own land may

be irrational, but its irrationality does not disprove its existence. The history of mankind, more especially the modern history of mankind—for example, in Russia—shows that the most beneficent, the most logical, the most exalted, the most ruthless schemes cannot prevail if this ache for ownership is ignored. It may be that mankind will not rid itself of the mania for owning things, as Whitman called it, until it has been fully satisfied in every man. When the last peasant has owned the last acre, then, perhaps, the desire to own will die, and men will be content to be the children of the community, without hope of inheritance or power of bequest.

Parnell's belief, so far as the land question was concerned, did not extend beyond the common proposal of his time—namely, the three F's; and probably he would never have gone beyond this belief had not the potato crop failed in 1879. In the midst of that distress there were to be evictions, and the hungry were to be made homeless. Davitt swept through the West like an avenging angel, pouring out streams of rich eloquence which stirred the hearts even of those hungry men, but by himself he could do no more than that. He called a meeting of tenant farmers at Westport on June 8, 1879, and persuaded Parnell, at first reluctant, to attend it. The Church disapproved of "the new departure" because Fenians were mixed up in it, and a Fenian was as distasteful to the priests as a Freemason or an Orangeman. The Archbishop of Tuam actually condemned the Westport meeting, and warned Parnell not to take part in it.[1] But Parnell's perceptive eye saw that Davitt was right and Dr. MacHale wrong. He travelled from London to Westport, and addressed the meeting in icy tones which made a deeper

[1] *Life of Charles Stewart Parnell*, by R. Barry O'Brien, vol. i., p. 184. Mr. O'Brien gives the date of the Westport meeting as June 7, but Mr. M. M. O'Hara, in *Chief and Tribune*, gives it as Sunday, June 8. Sunday is a favourite day for meetings in Ireland, since they can be held immediately after Mass in the presence of a good-sized crowd.

impression on his auditors than the passionate eloquence of Davitt. Parnell has often been described as a poor speaker, and, indeed, he must have seemed such to people accustomed to the abundant rhetoric of his contemporaries, but he had a power of riveting men's minds with a single sentence that more ornate orators never possessed. A sentence which he used on this occasion became the password of the Land League, which was formally founded at the Imperial Hotel, Dublin, on October 21, 1879. The meeting was held in a downpour of rain before crowds which had travelled great distances to attend it. Davitt moved a political resolution, and was followed by a Mr. Thomas Joyce, who " examined the condition of the tenure on which Adam held Paradise, and, tracing the land question under Numa Pompilius, showed that the present system owed its origin to William the Conqueror." Then Parnell moved the agrarian resolution. " A fair rent," he said, " is a rent a tenant can reasonably pay according to the times; but in bad times the tenant cannot be expected to pay as much as he did in good times three or four years ago. . . . Now, what must we do in order to induce the landlords to see the position ?" He paused and surveyed the silent farmers, avidly listening to his cold, piercing words. " You must show the landlords that you intend to hold a firm grip on your homesteads and lands. You must not allow yourselves to be dispossessed as you were dispossessed in 1847. . . ." Here was no burning eloquence, no rich rhetoric, no flow of impassioned phrases to kindle the heart. Yet it was out of these dull, discoloured sentences that the peasant farmers drew the slogan of the Land League: " Keep a Firm Grip on your Land." Parnell was not a man who read poetry. Once, and once only, he quoted Portia's speech on the quality of mercy, and made a mess of it. He said to Mrs. O'Shea: " I lost that quotation you gave me and brought it out sideways, and there it was all the time crushed

up in my hand! Then I forgot the fellow's name, and called him 'the poet.'" "Well, Shakespeare can be called 'the poet,'" she replied. "Yes? Is that so? It seemed to worry some of the reporters; one came and asked me what I meant. You must make me learn it better next time."[1] But although he rarely read poetry and could not remember Portia's speech, and barely knew the name of Shakespeare, he could inspire poetry in others. His sister Fanny, now living in America with her mother, founded the American Ladies' Land League, and catching at her brother's prosaic phrase, made verses of it. One of them has been quoted in the first chapter—"Oh, by the God who made us all"—and another that followed it almost quoted the famous sentence: "Keep a Firm Grip on your Land."

But your own hands upraised to guard shall draw the answer down,
And bold and stern the deed must be that oath and prayer shall crown;
God only fights for them who fight—now hush that useless moan,
And set your faces as a flint, and swear to hold your own.

II

The Chief Secretary for Ireland at that time happened to be an empty-minded but courageous man, called James Lowther, whose method of dealing with a difficulty was to pretend that it was not there, or that its existence was due to the wickedness of agitators. He denied facts with a persistence that was almost heroic. An intelligent Chief Secretary might have averted much trouble in the future, but Heaven had been niggardly in its intellectual gifts to Mr. Lowther, though Disraeli amazingly omitted to notice the fact. Or perhaps that cynical mind imagined that mental gifts were not essential in a Chief Secretary for Ireland. Be that as it may, Mr. Lowther undoubtedly did his bit to establish the Land League. When the Irish party raised the

[1] *Charles Stewart Parnell*, by Katharine O'Shea, vol. i., p. 174.

question of agricultural distress in the House of Commons, Mr. Lowther displayed disdain instead of sympathy, and was not resentful when his followers howled down Mr. O'Connor Power, who had spoken for his party. The scene in the House on this occasion, when the miseries of starving men and women were being discussed, was so disgraceful that Mr. John Bright sharply rebuked the ineffable Lowther and his rowdy followers. Nothing was done. Parnell himself was busy with his game of obstruction, but Davitt was busier still in Ireland organising the farmers' societies into one organisation, the Land League. When he had completed his plans he took them to Parnell, who hesitated to approve them. But he quickly realised that Davitt would not drop his scheme, and that the Land League might become a formidable society; and since he did not choose to have a rival in authority, he agreed to the formation of the League, of which he was the first President. He was now thirty-three years of age, and had been in Parliament less than five years, but already he was the most widely-known Irishman of his day. The Government, at first contemptuous of the League, were now alarmed by it, and some arrests were made. Davitt was one of those who were taken by the police. But the arrests were farcical. No jury could be found to convict the prisoners, and they were released. Meantime, the distress continued and increased. Winter approached, and famine came with it. Funds for the relief of the starving peasantry were opened by the Lord Mayor of Dublin and the Duchess of Marlborough, whose husband was Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland; and soon about half a million persons were in receipt of relief. On December 21, 1879, Parnell, accompanied by Mr. John Dillon, sailed for America to collect money for food and clothing for their hungry countrymen.

This was a momentous journey for him. He was now about to face the Fenians in America. The notorious Clan-

na-Gael, whose members included men not squeamish about killing, had not taken kindly to " the new departure," and was suspicious of Parnell himself. There were forebodings among his supporters at Westminster. One said, " If he can hold his ground with the Clan-na-Gael, and afterwards hold it in the House of Commons, he will win Home Rule." But the speaker did not dare to hope that he would. The missionaries arrived in New York early in 1880, and immediately attacked the stronghold of the Clan-na-Gael. Mr. Asquith, who was one of Parnell's counsel during the Special Commission which enquired into the charges made against him by *The Times*, declared, according to Mr. T. P. O'Connor, that Parnell was as great a statesman as Bismarck, because of the skill with which he had passed through this struggle with the Clan-na-Gael and the Fenians in America. He had to reconcile the extremes of faith in America with the practice of constitutional politics at Westminster. He had to induce men who believed in the violent overthrow of the English Government in Ireland to subscribe money for the succour of the starving (which was easy enough), and the maintenance of an orderly and lawful agitation for self-government. Such a task might have daunted the most heroic mind, but it did not daunt Parnell. He knew what he wanted, and although there were some in America who offered a stiff resistance to his campaign, he succeeded in getting it. He did not talk much, but he listened a lot. When he met the leaders of the Clan-na-Gael, he allowed them to tell him at great length just what they thought and felt about the whole situation. He rarely told them what he thought. All he asked was that they should give his method a trial. He made no compact with them. He did not say, " If I fail in my attempt, I will take part in yours !" He neither bound them nor bound himself. And, amazingly, they yielded to his silence. Dillon and he then began a most

exhausting tour in the country. They spoke in sixty-two cities in sixty days, travelling by night and day on journeys that sometimes exceeded a thousand miles in length. Between the day when they left Ireland and the day when, three months later, they returned to it, they had covered sixteen thousand miles. And they collected £40,000. The climax to this triumphant tour came when Parnell was invited to speak before the House of Representatives in Washington, an honour which had previously been conferred only on three men: Lafayette, Bishop England of Charleston, and Kossuth, the Hungarian patriot.

The business of the tour was immense, and Parnell, who was a poor business man, without any capacity for keeping accounts, and strongly averse from letter-writing, soon found himself in difficulties because of the confusion in which the business involved him. He remembered that a young man, called Timothy Healy, who was born in Bantry in 1855, had manifested admiration and affection for him. This young man had organising ability, and was likely to be useful to his harassed leader, so Parnell cabled for him to come out to America and help him. It was an odd thing that Healy should feel a strong admiration, akin almost to love, for Parnell. Parnell felt none for him, and perhaps much of the misery of his last years may be ascribed to the singular fact that he could not give back to Tim Healy any of the affection which Healy gave to him. When they first met, Parnell had no newspaper to support him. The *Freeman's Journal,* owned and edited by Mr. Edmund Dwyer Gray, regarded him with distrust. Mr. Gray, indeed, doubted if Parnell were entirely sane. Healy was then London correspondent of the *Nation,* of which one of his relatives was editor, and he " wrote up Parnell and obstruction week after week with that bright, fiery, corrosive wit which we now all know; and the *Nation* newspaper was Parnell's first

organ, and Tim Healy his first spokesman in the press."[1] Mr. Healy immediately prepared to obey Parnell's request. " The very evening of the day when the cable arrived, he was on his way to Queenstown; and in little more than a week he was by Parnell's side, reducing chaos to order, arranging meetings, warding off bores, writing scores of letters every day. . . . If ever man faithfully served another, Tim Healy was the faithful servant of Mr. Parnell."[2] They went from the United States to Canada, where, in Toronto, Parnell for the first time was called " the uncrowned king of Ireland." They left America sooner than they had intended to do, because Disraeli suddenly sprang a General Election on Great Britain. They sailed from New York on a bitterly cold March morning, and the 69th Regiment, which was at one time entirely composed of Fenians, saw them off. Parnell stood on the bridge with his head uncovered, despite the driving sleet, until the tender started. " It was a fine sight," said Mr. Healy, " to see the 69th salute as we sailed off, and Parnell wave his hand in response, looking like a king." They landed at Queenstown on March 21, 1880, and immediately began their electioneering.

III

But before Parnell left America, he contrived once more to see the lady who had jilted him eight years earlier. She had retained her beauty, but Parnell had not retained his ardour, though, perhaps, she could have stirred him again had she chosen. He now had the distinction which he lacked when they last met, but her romantic mind had veered a little in the meantime. She did not now demand distinction in her husband, but instead a devotion to herself which Parnell was not prepared to give. He took her to a ball, and as they

[1] *Life of Charles Stewart Parnell*, by T. P. O'Connor, p. 72.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 73.

mounted the stairs she slipped a fragment of paper into his hand, on which she had scribbled this verse:

> Unless you can muse in a crowd all day
> On the absent face that fixed you,
> Unless you can dream that his faith is fast
> Through behoving and unbehoving,
> Unless you can die when the dream is past,
> Oh, never call it loving.[1]

On the second occasion when he met Mrs. O'Shea, he told her the story of this love affair, and asked her who had written the lines. Mrs. O'Shea said "it sounded like one of the Brownings," and he replied, "Well, I could not do all that, so I went home." One may be permitted to regret that the devotion which he was not prepared to give to Miss Woods he was too ready to give to Mrs. O'Shea. But the lady was not inconsolable. A young American advocate entered the room, and Parnell perceived that she was immediately attracted by him, and that he had lost her through his inability to love as the Brownings loved. He never saw her again, and she married, presumably, the young advocate, in whom, however, she found neither distinction nor devotion. The marriage was not happy. We may here take our leave of her. Parnell's brother, John, and his sister, Theodosia, Mrs. Paget, were in Newport in 1880, a few months after Parnell had had his last interview with Miss Woods, and they decided to "call on Charley's old sweetheart." "She talked rapidly, evidently rendered somewhat nervous by the memories which we aroused. Suddenly she said: 'Do tell me how is your great brother Charles. How famous he has become!' She stopped and sighed for a moment, and seemed almost bursting into tears, then suddenly cried, as if from the bottom of her heart: 'Oh, why did I not marry him? How happy we should have been together!'"

[1] Elizabeth Barrett Browning.

IV

Parliament had been dissolved three days before Parnell landed at Queenstown on March 21, 1880. The first election in Ireland was to take place on All Fools' Day, so there was little time left for electioneering. His tour in America had robbed him of much of his strength, but it was a success in all other respects. He might reasonably expect to be received in Ireland with universal homage. But at Queenstown he was met by a deputation of Fenians, who informed him that they had no faith in constitutionalism, and expressed their belief that " the Nationalists . . . as a political party " would not participate in the election. These were mild men compared with those whom he was to encounter almost immediately afterwards at Enniscorthy, where a mob assailed him and tried to drag him from his platform. An egg struck him on the beard, and trickled down on to his clothes. His trousers were torn. But he confronted the mob in Enniscorthy with courage and dignity, and none who saw him then ever forgot the pride in his countenance. " How did he look ? " said Mr. O'Connor to Mr. Healy. " Like a man of bronze," was the reply. Mr. John Redmond, who was with him during this scene, was mauled by the mob, receiving cuts on his face, and was told by his chief, " Well, you have shed your blood for me, at all events." Parnell's candidates, despite the mob, won the election. He was himself candidate for three seats: Meath, Mayo, and the city of Cork. When the election was over, Parnell found that he had been elected for all three. He chose to sit for Cork, which he continued to represent until his death. On April 26, 1880, the Irish Parliamentary party, which had done very well in the election, met to choose a chairman in place of Mr. Butt, but there was no hope of an agreement then, so the meeting was postponed until May 17, when two

candidates were proposed: Mr. William Shaw, a sober-minded business man, whom Parnell, it was said, had called an old woman and unfit to lead any party; and Parnell. When the poll was declared, Parnell was in possession of a majority of five votes. Twenty-three had been cast for him, and eighteen for Mr. Shaw. He was now the leader of the Irish party. His age was thirty-four, and he had been in Parliament for five years.

Among those who voted for him was a new member of the party who was unknown to nearly all his colleagues. His name was Captain William Henry O'Shea, and he had been elected with the O'Gorman Mahon for the two-member constituency of County Clare at the election lately concluded. The O'Gorman Mahon was one of those picturesque ruffians who delight the hearts of maiden ladies. Mr. O'Hara, in *Chief and Tribune*, says " he had, of course, not a vestige of right to the grandiloquent title he assumed."

James Patrick O'Gorman Mahon was still erect, though he was an old man with white hair, and he stood six feet three in his stockings. He cut a figure at the court of Louis Philippe, where he became the friend of the king and the intimate of Talleyrand. He was a famous and feared duellist, respectfully treated by men and adored by women; but his blood was unquiet, and he could not continue in one place for long. Paris was the place to which he always returned, but he frequently went from it to fight in any wars that were being waged. Sometimes he was a captain, sometimes he was a colonel, sometimes a general, but always he was a nuisance. He was said to have fought under nearly every flag for kings in Europe and for kings in Africa. Then he took a turn at Irish politics, having temporarily exhausted the allurements of war and women, and for five years—1847-1852—he represented Ennis. He lost his seat by thirteen votes, and started again on his travels and adventures. He did not return to Ireland

or England for twenty years. During this time he went to Russia, where the Czar made him a lieutenant of the international bodyguard, a rank which placed him above many generals. He fought against the Tartars; visited China, India, and Farther India; camped with Arabs; fought under the Turkish flag; took service with Austria; drifted back to France, and joined an expedition to South America. He fought with the Uruguayan army, and then enlisted in that of Chile. He became tired of soldiering, and asked the Government of Chile to make a sailor of him, which they did. He became an admiral. At the end of the Chilian wars he crossed the mountains to Brazil, and was made a colonel in the Brazilian army. The South American appetite for disturbance became satiated after a while, and the O'Gorman Mahon sadly returned to France, where he found Louis Napoleon on the throne of his old friend Louis Philippe. Louis Napoleon immediately made him a colonel in a regiment of chasseurs, and once more he became the hero of Paris and the master of many mistresses. But the France of Louis Napoleon was not the France of Louis Philippe, so he departed for Germany, where he became intimately acquainted with Bismarck and the Crown Prince. Then, finding that duelling was no longer fashionable and that women were tiresome, he returned to Ireland and entered political life a second time. He was elected for County Clare at a bye-election in 1879, and again at the General Election in 1880. "I have fought twenty-two serious duels," he said to Mr. Gladstone, "and in all my life I have never been challenged. I was always the aggressor." Yet Gladstone liked him.[1]

How this libidinous old fire-eater became acquainted with

[1] This account of the O'Gorman Mahon is taken from an article in the *New York Sun*, part of which was reprinted in *United Ireland* on July 25, 1891. The O'Gorman Mahon had died at Chelsea on June 17, 1891, four months before Parnell died.

Captain O'Shea is not known, but there were mysteries in the life of Captain O'Shea, and the O'Gorman Mahon, no doubt, entered into one of them. Their meeting was financially unfortunate for the younger man. Mrs. O'Shea tells how her husband, accompanied by the O'Gorman Mahon, came to her house at Eltham, after they had been elected for Clare, and spent the night in an uproarious recital of the way in which the election was won. The O'Gorman Mahon said to Mrs. O'Shea: " If you meet Parnell, Mrs. O'Shea, be good to him. His begging expedition to America has about finished him, and I don't believe he'll last the session out." Later, when his hostess had almost despaired of his ever going away, he suddenly turned to O'Shea, and said, " Now, Willie, 'twill slip easier into her ear from you !" O'Shea nervously began to slip it into her ear, but had hardly said four words when he was interrupted by his aged friend, who informed her that he was penniless, and that O'Shea, " with more zeal than discretion, had guaranteed the whole of the expenses for both, and where the amount, which they found totalled to about £2,000, was to come from they did not know."[1] Mrs. O'Shea, one gathers, found the money.

O'Shea voted for Parnell to lead the party, although, as he telegraphed to his wife, he feared his advanced views. The O'Gorman Mahon, no doubt, persuaded him to vote for him. " There was one man whom I saw then for the first time," says Mr. T. P. O'Connor, " and whose demeanour particularly attracted my attention. Slightly over-dressed, laughing, with the indescribable air of the man whom life had made somewhat cynical, he was in sharp contrast with the rugged, plainly dressed, serious figures around him. . . . Nobody knew him—except, perhaps, his colleague, the O'Gorman Mahon. Mr. Parnell never seemed to have seen him before. When the time came for his vote, his face grew

[1] *Charles Stewart Parnell,* by Katharine O'Shea. vol. i., p. 133.

pale, and, to everybody's surprise, his voice was for Parnell. It was Captain O'Shea."

O'Shea was the only son and the second of the two children of Henry O'Shea, a Dublin solicitor sprung from a Limerick family, who made a large fortune by buying up property belonging to impoverished landlords. The Government had passed a measure, known as the Encumbered Estates Act, by means of which property-owners, pressed for money, could sell their debt-laden demesnes. Mr. Henry O'Shea dealt in these demesnes very profitably, and, being an ambitious man, resolved that his daughter, Mary, and his son, William Henry, should have the best education that his money could buy. They were sent to schools in England, France, and Spain, and became accomplished linguists. Mary, who spent most of her life in France, spoke English with a French accent; her brother, who was educated at Oscott and Trinity College, Dublin, spoke it with a marked English accent; and their father had an Irish brogue. Mrs. O'Shea, the mother of these two children, was a Tipperary woman of small intelligence. She and her daughter developed an immense amount of that nauseous piety which is possessed by inferior Papists, and they became exceedingly tiresome to live with. The mother, who was a Comtesse of Rome, was unimportant: " a bundle of negations wrapped in a shawl—always in a very beautiful shawl." She was humourless, highly educated and excessively devout. Her daughter, a Lady of the Royal Order of Theresa of Bavaria, had much more character than her mother, but she also was humourless and too pietistic. She had engaged herself to an Italian of old and very disreputable family, but, after she had recovered from her third attack of rheumatic fever, she decided that her health was not good enough for the estate of marriage, so she went to her Italian's house, accompanied by several elderly and equally pious ladies and a cardinal, to inform him with some ceremony

that she could not be his wife. "She died a few years later in much suffering, but perfect happiness."

The army offered the easiest way into good society to a young, climbing gentleman, and so Mr. O'Shea purchased a commission for his son in the 18th Hussars. His instructions to his son were singular. "First," he said, "become a smart officer; secondly, do what the other men do and send the bill into me." Although young O'Shea was allowed a handsome sum, he fulfilled his father's instructions so well that he received a rebuke. He promised to amend his ways, whereupon Mr. O'Shea bought him a captaincy. A few years later he brought his father another bill, this time for £15,000, which Mr. O'Shea fondly paid, though he pointed out that this sort of thing could not continue without disaster to the entire family. The young captain thereupon sold his commission for £4,000. He married Katharine Wood, the thirteenth child of the Rev. Sir John Page Wood and his wife, Emma Caroline. Miss Wood, whose brother Evelyn became a Field-Marshal in the British Army, was born at Cressing, a village near Braintree, Essex, of which her father was vicar, on January 30, 1846.[1] Captain O'Shea, who was born

[1] She was generally believed to be considerably older than Parnell. Mrs. Dickinson states that she was "about ten years" his senior, but she was only five months older than he was. She died on February 5, 1921, at 39, East Ham Road, Littlehampton, Sussex, and was buried in Littlehampton cemetery in accordance with the rites of the Church of England. Her burial-place is marked by a substantial unpolished granite cross which bears on its base the following inscription:

TO THE BELOVED MEMORY
OF
KATHERINE,
WIDOW OF
CHARLES STEWART PARNELL.
BORN 30TH JAN., 1846.
DIED 5TH FEB., 1921.
Fide et Amore.

about that year also, had relatives in Spain, and his uncle John, who had founded a bank in Madrid, offered to take him into partnership with him if he would invest his £4,000 in the bank. Accordingly, after their marriage at Brighton on January 25, 1867, the young couple set off to make their fortune in Spain, where they remained for less than a year. A quarrel terminated the partnership, and Captain O'Shea and his young wife returned to England.

They started a stud-farm at Bennington, Hertfordshire, and Captain O'Shea took to gambling at race-meetings. There is a mysterious and inexplicable legend that sporting men are unusually honourable men. The legend is not supported by fact. Nevertheless, if a man hunts or keeps dogs, he is regarded as a person combining the honesty of one of the major prophets with the geniality and good-nature of a "friar of orders grey." Captain O'Shea generously believed in this legend, with the result that he landed himself in the Bankruptcy Court.

Their first child, a boy, named Gerard, was born in 1870 near Brighton, soon after the bankruptcy proceedings took place. For a time the O'Sheas lived on their relatives and in the various odd ways in which impecunious people do live. He began the mysterious life in London which he was to lead for a long time. His wife seems not to have known what he was doing during his frequent absences from their small house at Patcham, outside Brighton, but she complained of the dullness and solitude of her life, and demanded that he should establish her in London if he were to be engaged there much in the future.

They then moved to the Harrow Road, in London, where O'Shea fell ill and was beset by a generous money-lender, who, when he heard of his defaulting client's physical distress, forebore to press for his money and even sent some delicacies to him. Their circumstances considerably improved there-

after, and they moved to Beaufort Gardens, where their second child and first daughter, Norah, was born. Here they lived a fairly extravagant life, though Captain O'Shea's means of subsistence were not obvious, and he had been glad a short time before to have any sort of help from his wife's uncle, Lord Hatherley, who was Lord Chancellor. Some friction now came into the relationship between the O'Sheas, which was not removed by the birth of their second daughter, Carmen. His mysterious business, whatever it was, prevented him from going about with his wife, and when she found herself commiserated by her friends upon her solitude, her resentment increased. Their financial troubles recurred, but were removed by a cheque from Mrs. O'Shea's aunt, Mrs. Benjamin Wood, a remarkable old lady who employed George Meredith, at a salary of £300 per annum, to come to Eltham and read to her, stipulating only that he should not read any of his own works, which she could not endure. It was this aunt who, after a depressing period spent by Mrs. O'Shea in various seaside lodgings, bought her the house in Eltham which was to become important in the life of Parnell. It was called Wonersh Lodge, and was on the edge of Mrs. Benjamin Wood's park.

About this time Captain O'Shea became interested in the promotion of a company to develop some mining business in Spain, and he was appointed manager of the concern at La Mines at a good salary. He went off to Spain, leaving his wife and family at Eltham, and remained there for eighteen months, during which time he did not once come home. The business failed, and O'Shea came back for a while to Eltham; but he and his wife did not live together very happily, and so they agreed to a semi-separation. He was to live in London, and come down to Eltham only at the week-end. His week-end visits were not regularly made. He carried on his mysterious business in London, but began

to think that he would like to lead a political life. He went to Ireland early in 1880, where he met the O'Gorman Mahon, and Disraeli's dissolution having then taken place, they both offered themselves to the electorate of County Clare, and, despite the general dislike of Captain O'Shea's over-dressed appearance, were elected. Up to the time of the meeting in Dublin, when Parnell was chosen to be the leader of the Irish party, neither he nor Captain O'Shea had ever met. Mrs. O'Shea, whose first three children were then born, did not meet Parnell until the middle of the summer of 1880.

V

The Sardonic Dramatist had assembled his characters and the play was about to begin. The prologue had been performed, a thing of haunted destinies, and the first act was to pass in circumstances which seemed fair, despite the dark background. The characters were, except one, young, and most of them were handsome. Parnell and O'Shea and Mrs. O'Shea and Davitt and Healy—all these were of an age, and each of them was gifted. The exception to the youth of this company was Gladstone, an old, undaunted man, poised like the eagle he was said to resemble, until the moment came for him to swoop down and destroy the daring youth who had thrown a pebble at him. O'Shea was a clever man in a mean way, and he had a bitter, witty tongue. Healy had immense ability and a tongue like a poisoned arrow. Davitt, the purest mind of them all, had the austere beauty of a saint and a selfless love of people. There was no hatred or uncharitableness in Davitt. The English people had shamefully used him, but he did not permit their misuse of him to blind him to their virtues. If he could have won Parnell's confidence, he might have saved Parnell; but his chastity of mind and heart left him too fastidious ever to

tolerate the tortured passions of his chief. Bitterness seldom came to Davitt's tongue, but there was one time when he allowed himself to describe Parnell as "a cold-blooded sensualist." It was a strange misunderstanding of a man. The legend that Parnell was cold-blooded will not easily be destroyed, but no one who has made himself acquainted with the facts of Parnell's life can fail to realise that underneath that cold appearance there was an unquenchable flame. It is a strange and deplorable thing that Michael Davitt, that tender man, never saw the flame in Parnell's heart. Healy could have seen it, had not Parnell hidden it from him; and when at last it was revealed to him, he spat upon it. There is an unsavoury piety in some Papists which makes their minds turn rancid. Tim Healy had a sort of purity which became nauseous because it was unaccompanied by any kind of charity. His bitter tongue leapt out of his mouth like a hot blast of hate when he spoke of anyone who had fallen into mortal sin; and when he referred to a woman who had offended against the law, he did so in terms that made even the strong of stomach feel sick. O'Shea crept in the shadows, meanly clever, mocking the vulgar accents of his colleagues, deriding their homely manners and their ill-made clothes. He schemed and schemed and schemed, until one might have imagined that the blood of all the informers of Ireland was in his veins. And while he schemed he let a devouring hatred for Parnell consume his own soul. The tragic figure himself, yielding to the passion of hatred when an effort of love was demanded from him, spread hatred all about him. Yet no man anywhere ever roused the love of a nation as Parnell roused the love of the Irish. The love of the English was waiting for him, had he chosen to take it, but the Sardonic Dramatist, who gave him many gifts, denied him the power of discerning where affection was to be found outside his own house.

He was now the master of Ireland and was soon to be the

master of England. His fortune was fair, though he had neglected his estate and squandered much of his money in political enterprise. There was no need for *his* tenants to ask for a reduction of rent, for they did not pay any; and when they wished to demonstrate their admiration for the chief, they went to his shooting-box at Aughavannagh and denuded it of game. Avondale rarely saw him now. It was left in the unthriftful guard of Mrs. Dickinson and her drunken husband. Mrs. Parnell, that restless, hate-harbouring woman, crossed and recrossed the Atlantic, settling nowhere. The Parnells were scattering. Fanny was busy with her Land League in America. Anna had founded the Irish Ladies' Land League at home. Delia was enduring the jealous love of her husband in France. The chief himself, the most lonely of them all, lived in lodgings in London, so unattractive that he had no inducement to leave the House of Commons. In the whole of his party he had no friend. But he had got what he wanted. He was the leader of the Irish race. When Mr. Justin McCarthy was asked what had brought Parnell to this position, he replied: " He had the genius of a Commander-in-Chief. . . . Others of us might be useful in fixing lines of policy in advance. But when a crisis arose, when something had to be done on the instant which might have a serious effect in the future, we were no good. We were paralysed. Parnell made up his mind in an instant, and did the thing without doubting or flinching." Brave words and true words, for Parnell was of Anglo-Saxon blood, the blood of authority and leadership, while his followers were Celts, in whose veins flowed only the blood of obedience and submission.

CHAPTER VI

THE LAND LEAGUE; THE BOYCOTT; AND MRS. O'SHEA

I

DISRAELI'S attempt to rattle the electorate with an Irish bogey dismally failed, and his Government resigned. Mr. Gladstone took his place as Prime Minister, and appointed as Chief Secretary for Ireland Mr. W. E. Forster, a negligible gentleman who was a member of the Society of Friends. Mr. Forster had shown an intelligent interest in education, and a philanthropic interest in Ireland.[1] Mr. Gladstone himself afterwards described him, in a memorandum quoted by Mr. Morley in the *Life*, as "a very impracticable man placed in a position of great responsibility."[2] He was an obstinate, unimaginative man who contrived to amass during his tenancy of the Chief Secretary's Lodge an amount of vengeful desire which went very ill with his religious professions. He did, indeed, receive provocation from Parnell, who unaffectedly despised him; but if he had paid more attention to the teaching of his fine society, and less attention to the taunts of the Irish leader, he would probably have left a better record behind him in Ireland. The unquestionable fact about Ireland then was that large masses of the people were living in a state of destitution through causes over which they had no control, and that the Government now in power, though its leader had copiously wept over the sorrows of Bulgars and Macedonians, knew as little of this misery, if, indeed, it knew as much, as had been known by the Government over which Disraeli ruled. Half a million persons had been fed out of charitable funds. An intensive agitation

[1] A. M. Sullivan in *New Ireland* praised "the broad-backed young Yorkshireman" who did so much to relieve the sufferings of the peasantry during the famine of 1847.

[2] Bk. viii., chap. iv, sect. 2.

was being conducted among the farmers. These and other facts were easily ascertainable, but Mr. Gladstone's Government did not discover them. When the Queen's Speech was read on April 29, 1880, it contained references to every important question of the time, except one: the question of Irish land. Mr. Gladstone himself imagined that Ireland's troubles had been settled by the disestablishment of the Church of Ireland and the Land Act of 1870. The thought was almost on a par with " old Tom Parnell's " belief that he had only to arrange the texts of the Bible in a certain order, and immediately all the problems that vex the mind would be solved. Mr. John Bright displayed some concern on the Land Question, but Mr. John Bright, as usual, did not see his way to do anything. There are times when one is tempted to wonder whether Mr. John Bright ever did see his way to do anything ! . . . Between 1876 and 1880 six Land Bills were introduced into the House of Commons, one of them by Mr. Crawford, an Ulster Protestant, the others by Mr. Butt, another Protestant, but all of them were either talked out or heavily defeated. Mr. Gladstone's Government gave no sign that it was prepared to deal with a matter which was of the first importance. They gave no sign that they were even aware that there was such a matter to be considered. But they were soon compelled to consider it.

Parnell was the elected leader of the Irish party, but his election had not been unanimous. There was a substantial minority in the party which followed Mr. Shaw rather than Mr. Parnell, and this minority decided to sit with and support the Government on the ground that " the Liberals were the friends of Ireland." Parnell and his followers sat on the Opposition benches on the ground that " the Irish Nationalists should always sit in Opposition until the full measure of their demands was conceded." This division of forces, by itself, was sufficient to confirm the Liberals in

their belief that the Irish need not be taken too seriously. At all events, the Government arbitrarily declined to make concessions to the Irish people (which were subsequently made) at the time when they might most usefully have been granted; and the result of their refusal was that Mr. Shaw's position collapsed beneath him, and his followers, for the most part, transferred their obedience to Parnell. An immediate result of the activities of Parnell's party was the introduction into the House of Commons by Mr. Forster of a "Compensation for Disturbance Bill," which was carried in the Commons, after more than a month's discussion, by a majority of sixty-seven votes, and rejected by the House of Lords, after two days' discussion, by a majority of 231 votes. "Soon after the rejection of the Bill," says the *Annual Register*, "there came most disquieting reports from Ireland. There were riots at evictions; tenants who had ventured to take the place of the evicted occupiers were assaulted, their property damaged, their ricks burned, their cattle maimed; there was a mysterious robbery of arms from a ship lying in Queenstown Harbour; and it was said that a plot had been discovered for the blowing up of Cork Barracks." The Land League increased its membership at an astonishing rate. Miss Anna Parnell was hurrying up and down the country inciting women to resolutions which, when he heard of them, disgusted her brother.

It is no part of our business here to conceal facts. Irish movements have undeniably been accompanied by outbursts of crime which appal the sensibilities. Ireland, until lately, was represented as a drooping damsel, abandoned and mournful, who vainly endeavoured to play lugubrious music on a broken harp. It was a pretty picture, but not entirely faithful to its subject. Mr. William Butler Yeats, that very urban author who was reputed because of a prolonged residence in Bedford Park and the purlieus of the Euston Road

to have unique knowledge of the nature of peasants and the problems of agriculture, invited his readers to believe that the Celt was a wistful, dreamy person, addicted to the more remote sorts of poetry, and passionately convinced of the existence of fairies, ghosts, and leprechauns. But the Celt has another and darker side to his nature than is dreamt of by Mr. William Butler Yeats. There are dark recesses in the Celtic soul where wild beasts lurk, and sometimes in the silence of the Celtic twilight these beasts emerge, ready for ravishment and the darkest destruction. A romantic realist, John Millington Synge, went and peered into the recesses, and returned and told his appalled countrymen what he had seen. He stripped the rags of romance from the Celtic Irish, and was publicly execrated for besmirching his race. Yet the beasts were there, and had not been imagined or invented by Synge, and a time was soon to come when they would emerge from their recesses to ravish and to destroy, and not even the most purblind member of the Gaelic League would be able to deny their existence. It happens now and then that the world, deceived by the apparent kindliness and gay behaviour and pretty melancholy of the Celt, finds itself horrified by his unparalleled cruelty. That has happened in our own time. "We devised certain 'bloody instructions' to use against the British," says Mr. P. S. O'Hegarty, himself a member of the Supreme Council of the Irish Republican Brotherhood, and now a highly-placed Post Office official under the Irish Free State Government. "We adopted political assassination as a principle; we devised the ambush; we encouraged women to forget their sex and play at gunmen; we turned the whole thoughts and passions of a generation upon blood and revenge and death; we placed gunmen, mostly half-educated and totally inexperienced, as dictators with powers of life and death over large areas. We derided the moral law, and said that there was no law but

the law of force. And the moral law answered us. Every devilish thing we did against the British went its full circle, and then boomeranged and smote us tenfold; and the cumulative effect of the whole of it was a general moral weakening and a general degradation and a general cynicism and disbelief in either virtue or decency, in goodness or uprightness or honesty. The Irregulars . . . made people ask themselves whether Ireland was worth saving, and whether it was worth any man's while to trouble his head about anything but himself. They demonstrated to us that our deep-rooted belief that there was something in us finer than, more spiritual than, anything in any other people, was sheer illusion, and that we were really an uncivilised people with savage instincts."[1]

Mr. O'Hegarty, yielding to despair, goes on in the same book[2] to say that " we have degenerated morally and spiritually. The last years of the war were years of moral unsettlement, of which waves of loot and materialism were the result. There has been a grave increase in sexual immorality, and a general abandonment to levity and dissipation. . . . Every country in Europe had its riot of dissipation, I know, after the war . . . and morally we have degenerated proportionately far more than any of them."

But Mr. O'Hegarty's mournful account of the immediate results of self-government in the Irish Free State is not an account of something unique in the history of Ireland. The outburst of crime which he deplores was paralleled, if not actually exceeded, by the outburst of crime under the Land League. We may acknowledge that such crimes are the accompaniments of all efforts of misused people to attain good government or freedom; and that what happened in Ireland lately and in Parnell's time happened also in Russia when the autocracy was destroyed, and in France during the

[1] *The Victory of Sinn Fein*, by P. S. O'Hegarty, p. 125.

[2] Page 179.

Revolution. But we must not blind ourselves to the fact that the Celtic nature, like the Latin nature, is a cruel nature, and that it can very easily change its appearance from that of a sorrowful lady into that of a raging hag. Between the years 1878 and 1880 there was an immense amount of appalling crime in Ireland. Parnell, as the whole of his life proves, detested crime and cruelty. Stories of brutality done to Irish peasants had first roused his resentment against England. " My brother, I know," says Mr. J. H. Parnell in his *Life*, " always set his face strongly against outrage of any kind. As a last extremity, he might have consented to lead an army in the field; but the idea of cowardly attacks on individuals, and above all the maiming of animals, repelled him to the last degree." Davitt and he, on Davitt's instigation, sent a circular, which Davitt drafted, to all the branches of the Land League, warning them against outrages, particularly those against animals. Davitt, indeed, did not spare himself during this dark time in his efforts to dissuade the people from violent acts, and he travelled up and down the length of Ireland, exhorting them, wherever he went, to remember that crime is futile and to keep their hands clean. The exhortations were in vain.

Parnell, until the time when Davitt returned from America to plead for a more civilised agitation, was uncertain of himself. He believed that the English people would not pay any attention to the needs of Ireland until they were forced to do so. At Manchester, on July 15, 1877, he told a large audience that he did " not believe in a policy of conciliation of English feeling or prejudices. I believe that you may go on trying to conciliate English prejudice until the day of judgment, and that you will not get the breadth of my nail from them. . . . Did we get the abolition of tithes by the conciliation of our English taskmasters? No; it was because we adopted different measures. Did O'Connell

gain emancipation for Ireland by conciliation? . . . Catholic emancipation was gained because an English king and his minister feared revolution. Why was the English Church in Ireland disestablished and disendowed? Why was some measure of protection given to the Irish tenant? It was because there was an explosion at Clerkenwell and because a lock was shot off a prison van at Manchester! We will never gain anything from England unless we tread upon her toes; we will never gain a single sixpennyworth from her by conciliation." These were strong and terrible words, but we will do well to remember that, although the man who uttered them was overwrought and only thirty-one years of age, the British Government undeniably had given him good cause for saying them. He was older now, though only three years older, and he was leader of his party. When he spoke at Manchester he had no personal experience of outrage, but now, in 1880, he had; and outrage, when he came into contact with it, appalled and horrified him.

His position was one of extraordinary difficulty. During 1879, 6,239 tenants were evicted from their homes. In 1880, 10,457 tenants were evicted. More than 23,000 persons were evicted from their homes in four years. These people were dogged by poverty and hunger and cold. Mr. John Bright, says Mr. M. M. O'Hara, in *Chief and Tribune*, shed tears in his young manhood because the churchwardens of Rochdale distrained on a poor parishioner, and with " their ruthless hands " seized his family Bible for the Church rate. But tears did not come into his eyes when some thousands of Irish men and women and children were thrown on the roadside. Here was cause for the commission of crime, if ever there was cause, and the responsibility for it did not rest upon Parnell. He had warned the Government. He had protested against the neglect to propose in the Queen's Speech any ameliorative land laws. The warning and the

protest had been ignored. His business now was to guide, as best he could, his distracted followers. The task was a hard one. The constitutionalists had always before them the spectre of the Fenians, who disbelieved in any but violent means to achieve self-government. At any moment the guidance of the Irish people might be snatched from the hands of Parnell by the hands of a physical force man, and who could say then what would be the end of Ireland? Gladstone was seventy-one years of age in the year 1880: Parnell was only thirty-four. Gladstone had many years of experience in the highest offices of the Crown behind him, and he had the counsel and support of distinguished and experienced men. Parnell had five years of Parliamentary life and less than three months of leadership of a sharply-divided party behind him, and he had only the counsel and support of young men as inexperienced as himself. Would Gladstone at Parnell's age, in similar circumstances, have done so well as Parnell did? Perhaps he would, but we may be permitted to hold a doubt about it.

Parnell had, then, to contend with this widespread epidemic of crime and yet to keep his hold on his people, and he did it in a very remarkable way. He spoke in various parts of the country, but the speech which contained the first suggestion of his way of dealing with the situation was made at Ennis on September 19, 1880, when he enunciated the doctrine of the boycott. There was to be war, but it was to be war of a different sort from that which the Celts were too ready to wage. It was a sort of Passive Resistance, except that there was to be some active resistance as well. "Depend upon it," he said, "that the measure of the Land Bill next session will be the measure of your activity and energy this winter. It will be the measure of your determination not to pay unjust rents; it will be the measure of your determination to keep a firm grip on your homesteads;

it will be the measure of your determination not to bid for farms from which others have been evicted, and to use the strong force of public opinion to deter any unjust men amongst yourselves—and there are many such—from bidding for such farms. Now what are you to do to a tenant who bids for a farm from which his neighbour has been evicted?"

The hoarse, hungry crowd, avidly listening to every word that he said, roared out, "Kill him! Shoot him!"

He waited until the tumult died down, and then very quietly, holding his hands behind his back while he spoke, he said: "I think I heard someone say shoot him, but I wish to point out to you a very much better way—a more Christian and a more charitable way—which will give the lost sinner an opportunity of repenting." The crowd stirred with suppressed excitement, but the silence which he had imposed upon them was not broken. He continued in a voice that pierced the mind of every person who heard him:

"When a man takes a farm from which another has been evicted, you must show him on the roadside when you meet him, you must show him in the streets of the town, you must show him at the shop counter, you must show him in the fair and in the market-place, and even in the house of worship, by leaving him severely alone, by putting him into a moral Coventry, by isolating him from his kind as if he were a leper of old—you must show him your detestation of the crime he has committed, and you may depend upon it that there will be no man so full of avarice, so lost to shame, as to dare the public opinion of all right-thinking men and to transgress your unwritten code of laws."

His audience knew exactly what he meant, for one of them, with the quick wit of his race, anticipated the policy half-way through the passage. "Shun him!" he shouted, when Parnell had reached the words "you must show him in the street." Three days later, the policy of the boycott was practised for the first time on Captain Boycott, an English-

man, who was agent to Lord Erne. He was offered what was considered to be a just rent by the tenants on the Erne estate, and he declined to accept it. The tenants refused to pay more, and ejectment processes were issued against them, but not served, for the process server was persuaded to cease from serving. Captain Boycott's servants and farm-labourers and stablemen left him in a body. The shopkeepers refused to supply him with goods, the blacksmith and laundress were told not to work for him, his letters and telegrams were not delivered. It was not until fifty Orangemen, under the protection of the military and the police and a couple of field-pieces, arrived on the Erne estate that Captain Boycott's crops were gathered and saved. But Captain Boycott departed from Connaught, leaving his name behind him for Parnell's policy, and did not return.

This was surely a great piece of political strategy? Parnell seriously embarrassed the Government, which he was entitled to do; he put the landlords in an extremely awkward position; he kept his hold on his followers, whether they were constitutionalists or physical force men; and he diverted the minds of the people from crime. No great policy is ever completely successful, and a time came when wild men said "Send him to hell!" instead of "Send him to Coventry!" But who will deny that the mind which conceived the policy of the boycott and induced a distracted race, inflamed to the commission of appalling crime, to abandon its violent methods and use his "more Christian and charitable" weapon—who will deny that this mind was a great mind? We have already noted the fact that when Davitt returned from America, he persuaded Parnell to issue a circular to the Land League branches denouncing violence and cruelty to animals. The persuasion was not necessary because Parnell was indifferent to violence and cruelty to animals, but because he was not willing to jeopardise his own policy by seeming to be doing

Mr. Gladstone's work. Nevertheless, he allowed the circular to be issued, for now the wilder men, driven to their excesses by the excesses of the Government and the crass conduct of the landlords whom the Government upheld, were reviving the policy of violence and murder which Parnell had put down. The state of the people in the west steadily grew worse. General Gordon, who visited Ireland in the winter of 1880, wrote that, " from all accounts and my own observation, the state of our fellow-countrymen in the parts I have named is worse than that of any people in the world, let alone Europe," and he described them as " lying on the verge of starvation in places where we would not keep cattle."

The Government were now brought up short. Their thoughts, according to Mr. Morley, were " violently drawn from Dulcigno and Thessaly, from Batoum and Erzeroum, from the wild squalor of Macedonia and Armenia to squalor not less wild in Connaught and Munster, in Mayo, Galway, Sligo, and Kerry."[1] The House of Lords, invincibly fatuous about Ireland, had thrown out the Compensation for Disturbance Bill after two days of contemptuous discussion. What was the Government now to do? It did what Governments seemed always to do in those days: it fell back upon coercion. When a man cries out with hunger, you tighten his belt for him; and if he protests that this is a poor substitute for food, you kick him in the stomach. Constables and soldiers were poured into the disaffected areas. " In Galway they had a policeman for every forty-seven adult males, and a soldier for every ninety-seven."[2] Lord Cowper, the Lord-Lieutenant, and Mr. Forster, the Chief Secretary, had made up their minds that Parnell was the source of all the trouble. They did not think that he instigated the

[1] *Life of Gladstone*, by John Morley, bk. viii., chap. iv., sect. 2.
[2] *Ibid.*

outrages, but they thought that he connived at them; and towards the end of 1880 they concluded that the Habeas Corpus Act would have to be suspended. They did not come to this conclusion easily. They had put their faith in their Compensation for Disturbance Bill, but when that was rejected by the Lords they lost heart and behaved as if the Bill had been thrown out by the tenant farmers. They could not coerce the peers, so they coerced the Irish. On November 2, 1880, an information was sworn against the Land League for conspiracy to prevent the payment of rent, to resist the process of ejectment, to prevent the taking of farms from which tenants have been evicted, and to create ill-will among Her Majesty's subjects. Parnell was the first of the fourteen persons named in the information. If the trial of these men by jury failed through the reluctance of any jury to convict them, then Habeas Corpus would be suspended and the offenders would be sent to prison without trial. The State trial took place on January 25, 1881, and ended as the Lord-Lieutenant had anticipated: the jury failed to agree. Ten of them were for an acquittal, two for a conviction. Parnell jubilantly hurried from the court to catch the boat for England and for Eltham, where lived Mrs. O'Shea.

II

For the Sardonic Dramatist had brought his characters together. Mrs. O'Shea, when her husband became one of the members for County Clare, resolved to help him in his political career by giving dinner-parties and receptions at Thomas's Hotel, in Berkeley Square. Several dinners were given, to each of which Parnell was invited as her husband's leader. He accepted the invitations, but did not come to the dinners; and on one occasion the other guests, commenting

on " the empty chair," laughingly defied her to make Parnell fill it. She listened while tales were told of his aloofness and inaccessibility, and heard how eminent London hostesses had vainly endeavoured to attract him to their receptions, and while she listened she resolved that she would make him sit in " the empty chair " at her next dinner. There was a foolish legend that Captain O'Shea used his wife to ruin Parnell. It was said that he asked Gambetta for advice, and Gambetta said, " Set a woman on to him !" Mrs. O'Shea was the " woman," but she ruined the plot by falling in love with the victim of it ! . . .

Mrs. O'Shea was reputed to be a handsome woman, although some of her portraits hardly support her reputation for beauty. Her face was big and broad and strong, despite her look of emotionalism, and her eyes were large and fine and honest. She had an unusually big, uneven nose which marred her beauty, and her mouth was long and loose and nervous. Had one not known she was English, one might have thought, judging by her portraits, that she was Italian. Anyone might have taken Parnell for an Englishman: few would have taken Mrs. O'Shea for an Englishwoman. She was a resolute woman, not easily diverted from her determinations, and it is very likely that her tenacity and decision made her irresistible to Parnell, who, though himself a man of resolution, was, at the time he met her, a sick man suffering from physical and nervous exhaustion. She was a robust woman, physically stronger than Parnell, to whom her bodily strength must have been an additional attraction, as it was also a danger. She had endured poverty with a fair amount of fortitude, and had nursed her husband through four attacks of measles, a disease to which he was prone in times of acute financial distress. She had coped with adversity, rearing her three children in circumstances that might have daunted her, and the fact that she was a good mother is

proved by the decision of her children to stand by her when she was divorced by their father. There are matters into which no outsider can ever penetrate, but it is well to state here that this woman, who was foully abused for the best part of her life by men who forgot to be decent when they mentioned her name, was not the monster of infidelity and shame that she was called. She kept her children's affection, and she faithfully cherished and loved Charles Parnell from the moment she met him until the moment, eleven years later, when he died in her arms. There were aspects of their life together which do not bear close scrutiny—deceits and treacheries and ignominious subterfuges—but these are undissociable from all such tragedies of love, and they become pardonable or unpardonable according to whether those who view them do so with the eyes of understanding or the eyes of undiscerning correctitude.

A judge will describe as sordid a situation which, when observed by a poet, will appear to be romantic. The love of Paolo for Francesca, if submitted to the judgment of the President of the Divorce Court, might seem a mean and squalid intrigue. Almost one can hear his lordship sonorously, but coldly, accusing Paolo of betraying his friend and wrecking a happy home, or turning the love of Francesca to derision and shame by naming her a common adulteress. Yet these sorrowful lovers have raised the imagination of myriads of men and women from the dust-heaps of society to the vast ranges of the sky. The young lovers, Romeo and Juliet, must have been very tiresome to their friends, who, no doubt, had difficulty in concealing their boredom at this display of callow love. Their death, had it been made the subject of a coroner's inquiry, would have been ascribed to suicide while of unsound mind, with a rider to the jury's verdict censuring the parents. Yet out of this pitiful traffic has come a poet's play which has not failed these three hundred

years past to move deeply the generous emotions of mankind. It may yet be that a poet will find in the love of Charles Parnell and Katherine O'Shea material for one of the world's great tragedies of love.

Having accepted the challenge to persuade Parnell to attend her next dinner, Mrs. O'Shea resolved to go to the House of Commons and call him out to speak to her in Palace Yard. She sent in her card, and presently he came. She describes him as " a tall, gaunt figure, thin and deadly pale." His face was always dead-white in colour, but now it had the pallor of ill-health and fatigue and anxiety. He was accused by his enemies of unleashing crime in his country, and although he knew that he had striven to restrain it, yet the consciousness that crimes were being committed must have terribly affected him. Could he control this tempestuous people over whom he had assumed a guardianship ? His influence was wide and deep, but there were signs that not even he could hope to keep in check the wild beasts issuing from the Celtic soul. A more callous man, a man with less sense of responsibility, might have calmed his thoughts with the assurance that the horror was none of his doing, and have left Mr. Gladstone's Government to make the best of it; but Parnell was the chosen chief of these people, and he could not disclaim responsibility for their welfare. We must, I think, bear in mind his profound anxiety at this time. We must remember that he was a young man, an over-wrought man, and a lonely man. He had the insatiable craving for comforting society which all shy and lonely men have. His life at that time was passed chiefly in the company of other men, but men were not congenial to him. This may or may not be a fault in him, but it was a fact, and it is seldom worth while to wander from the region of fact into the region of moral judgments. Through some perversity of fate, the Parnells, though they were affectionate, seemed

unable to keep together. Mrs. Parnell, their mother, no sooner arrived at Avondale than she pined to be back in Philadelphia. In Philadelphia, she sighed for Paris. In Paris, she sighed for London. In London, she sighed for Dublin. In Dublin, she sighed for Philadelphia. Little wonder that the people at Avondale called her a " flighty " woman. When she returned to Avondale, she immediately set about some foolish scheme to " improve " the place, to which her son sometimes consented, though now and then, in not unreasonable rage, he forbade her by telegraph to proceed with her plan. When his mother was away from Avondale, his sister Emily and her husband were there . . . and Captain Dickinson provided poor inducement to his brother-in-law to seek his society. Parnell loved Avondale, but his political life took him frequently from it; and the unfortunate facts of his situation prevented him from finding in it the homely comfort which he demanded, which ultimately was to be provided for him by Mrs. O'Shea. If Miss Woods had been less romantically-minded, had disesteemed distinction more and devotion less, when Parnell begged her to be his bride, there might have been a happy man contentedly living at Avondale, that " warm house " which he loved.

Mrs. O'Shea, who had gone to the House with her sister, Mrs. Steele, a lady who was to be unhappily involved in the divorce suit—observe how the Sardonic Dramatist is careful to bring all his characters on to the stage as quickly as possible —asked Parnell why he had not accepted her invitations, and whether she might hope some time to see him at her dinner-table. He told her that he had not opened his letters for several days, but that, if she would allow him, he would dine with her on his return from Paris, whither he was shortly going to see his sister, Theodosia, married to Commander Paget. It seems that these two emotional people, both of

them suffering from solitude, one of them ill and anxious, one of them unhappily married, instantly loved each other. Sudden love is, no doubt, a ridiculous thing, but it occurs. Mrs. O'Shea tells us that, as she leant forward in the cab to say good-bye to him, a rose fell out of her bodice on to her lap. Parnell picked it up, pressed it to his lips, and placed it in his button-hole. " This rose I found long years afterwards done up in an envelope, with my name and the date, among his most private papers, and when he died I laid it upon his heart."[1] With that display of sentiment the tragedy began. When Parnell returned from Paris he wrote to Mrs. O'Shea, and she invited him again to dinner, asking him to fix a date which would be convenient to him. He suggested the following Friday, and on that evening, rather late and looking frightfully ill, he arrived. The party was a small one, and when dinner was over Mrs. O'Shea carried her guests off to the Gaiety Theatre, where she and Parnell sat together in a corner of the box. He must have been hungry for a confidant, for hardly had they sat down together than he began to tell her of his troubles, political and love. The whole story of Miss Woods was poured into her receptive ears! . . .

Thereafter they were inseparable. She haunted the Ladies' Gallery in the House of Commons. They drove about in hansom cabs, along the Thames as far as Mortlake and elsewhere, and once he drove her all the way from Charing Cross to Eltham when she had missed her train. They met one afternoon at Cannon Street Hotel, and were about to enter the dining-room for tea, when he observed some of his colleagues sitting there, and he hurriedly took her to his private sitting-room. As they left the hotel, some of the Irish members were standing about in the hall, but he pretended that he did not see them. He had these queer fits of secretiveness at regular intervals, and they were not

[1] *Charles Stewart Parnell,* by Katharine O'Shea, vol. i., p. 136.

entirely due to his knowledge that he was engaged in an intrigue with a married woman. All his life he had been like that, and other members of his family shared his occasionally furtive habits. One of his brothers suffered from persecution mania, and would not remain in one place for very long at a time. Parnell's shy and sensitive nature made him acutely aware of other people's thoughts about him, and he could imagine the jests and jeers that would be made about Mrs. O'Shea and himself. That is a common characteristic of men who do not easily mingle with other men. A sort of feminine fastidiousness makes them incapable of facing their friends in a you-be-damned manner, though in other matters than love they can be as bold as brass. This secretiveness left him when calamity fell upon him. One of his colleagues was asked how Parnell looked when he entered Committee Room 15 when the Irish party met to consider their leadership after Mrs. O'Shea had been divorced by her husband. " He looked as if it was we who had committed adultery," was the reply.

And now began the life of incessant intrigue. It was said, after the divorce, that Captain O'Shea connived at his wife's infidelity; but he himself in extremely able letters denied the charge; and Mrs. O'Shea, in publishing her book, did so, she said, to vindicate his honour. He must have suspected that the relationship between his wife and his leader was a very unusual one, for we shall presently see that he challenged Parnell to a duel, but he swore—and his wife testifies that he swore truly—that he did not know of their adulterous relationship until shortly before he sued for a divorce. Few of us " know " anything, though we may surmise much, and perhaps the word " know " was used by Captain O'Shea in a severely metaphysical, rather than a popular, sense. We will discuss this matter towards the end of the story. Now it is sufficient to say that Parnell, already

overworked in politics, added to his burdens by conducting his love affair with Mrs. O'Shea in an elaborately secret fashion, which deceived hardly anyone and fatigued him excessively. He had codes for communicating with her. He adopted false names—Preston, Stewart, Fox, Smith—and hired houses and rooms where he might take her. When he travelled to Eltham by road, he took a hansom to the Nelson public-house in the Old Kent Road, where he dismissed it, walked a little way, and took another hansom to Eltham. He arranged to have letters posted to her from various places when he was not there, so that Captain O'Shea, if by chance he should be at Eltham when they arrived, might believe him to be out of London. The whole apparatus of deception was exceedingly silly, but Parnell had that simplicity of mind which made him imagine that such tricks deceived. Partly because of his feminine fastidiousness, partly because of his political situation, he stooped to tricks of intrigue which he would not have deigned to use had he been a normal man without heavy responsibilities.

His intimacy with Mrs. O'Shea was complete at the time of the State trial, when the jury, by ten to two, disagreed. There was even a ludicrous incident early in January, 1881, about three weeks before the date of the trial, when Captain O'Shea, suddenly irrupting into the house at Eltham, found Parnell's portmanteau in a bedroom, and, in a fury, dispatched it to London, whither he also went, with a threat to his wife that he would shoot Parnell. "My dear Mrs. O'Shea," Parnell wrote, "will you kindly ask Captain O'Shea where he left my luggage? I inquired at both parcel-office, cloak-room, and this hotel at Charing Cross to-day, and they were not to be found." O'Shea challenged his chief to a duel with pistols, sending the challenge by the O'Gorman Mahon, who must have gone to Parnell like an aged war-horse sniffing the scent of battle. With a little luck and the in-

dulgence of God, duelling might be revived ! . . . But the duel was never fought. Mrs. Steele made peace between Captain O'Shea and his wife, the former being persuaded to believe that what he had begun to suspect was an adulterous relationship was only an association for political purposes. Parnell added a comic touch to the affair by informing O'Shea, even while he was preparing to go abroad to shoot him, that Mrs. O'Shea was indispensable to him as a medium of communication with the Government, and hoping that he would have no objection after the duel to her continuing to act in that capacity. Their relationship was known. Mrs. O'Shea records the fact that the villagers at Eltham on Guy Fawkes' Day, 1880, brought an effigy of Miss Anna Parnell, sitting side by side with an effigy of the Pope, to her garden gate, where they remained for some time, cheering and hooting, in the hope that she and Parnell would be drawn out to see the cause of the trouble. Eventually, the villagers, disappointed in their design, marched off to burn the effigies, and when they had gone, Parnell, who is generally believed to have been without wit or humour, remarked: " Poor Anna ! Her pride in being burnt as a menace to England would be so drowned in horror at her company that it would put the fire out."[1] In this year, too, at a time when Parnell thought he was to be arrested, she concealed him[2] in her boudoir for a fortnight. She observes that no one knew he was there, but we may suspect that her servants kept their knowledge to themselves. It was during this period that he read *Alice in Wonderland* as if it were a treatise on engineering or astronomy. " I do not think he ever thought it in the least amusing, but he would read it earnestly from cover to cover, and, without a smile, remark that it was a ' curious book.' "

[1] *Charles Stewart Parnell,* by Katharine O'Shea, vol. i., p. 157.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 166.

III

He had flung himself into the Land League agitation with great vigour, manifesting an amount of energy which one could not have believed possible in a man of his constitution. Travelling in Ireland is not easy or comfortable to-day—a journey from Belfast to Cork is a tedious and absurdly complicated business—but in the year 1880 it was exhausting. Highly-strung men, mainly through the exercise of their will, can perform feats of endurance which would be nearly impossible for robuster men, and yet maintain a look of reserved energy when, in fact, they are on the verge of collapse. It is this fact which accounts for the difference between the impression made by Parnell's appearance on his colleagues in those strenuous times and the impression made on Mrs. O'Shea. They saw him as a man of resolution and vigour and unabatable strength, but she saw him as a worn-out man, perilously treading on the very verge of death. The elation of a fight sustained him in the fight, but the fragility of his constitution reduced him to a state of nervous debility when he was resting. Complaint was often made during the next ten years that he abandoned his followers, leaving them to do the fighting while he toyed in her tent with a woman of the enemy; but there were more excuses than one for him. At the risk of being tiresomely repetitious, we must insist that this fragile man was sick and tired, and that his absences from Westminster and the platforms of Ireland were due as much to sheer physical and mental exhaustion as to any other cause. He had endured great strain in America. He had fought and won a tremendous contest with the Clan-na-Gael and the Fenian Brotherhood. He had addressed multitudes of men and women in a great variety of places, separated from each other by miles of territory. He had collected two hundred thousand dollars for his afflicted people, some-

times himself descending into the area of a hall and carrying round the hat, because he knew that more money would be given to him than would be given to an unknown collector.

On his return to Ireland, he had immediately participated in a General Election, which he fought with few financial resources. Then he engaged in the Land League agitation, travelling from Dublin to Cork, from Cork to Athlone, from Athlone to Tipperary, from Tipperary to Limerick, from Limerick to Galway, from Galway to Dublin. In that uncertain climate, wet and windy, he ranged from place to place, delivering speeches that roused the hero-worship and stimulated the hearts of those who heard him. And in addition to all this expenditure of nervous tissue and energy, he carried on his Parliamentary work. We need not be surprised when we learn that he went down to Eltham weak and jaded for the solace and affection which this one woman in the world could give him, nor need we feel amazed that in the stress of his struggle in Ireland he sometimes scribbled banal notes to her, in which, almost gushingly, but always pathetically, he told her of his love for her and his continual desire to be with her. Mr. Hardy has put a song into the mouth of Tristram in *The Famous Tragedy of the Queen of Cornwall* which might have been sung by Mr. Parnell had he had any gift for song or any recognition of the poet's power. " Yes, Love," sings Tristram:

> Yes, Love, true it is sadness suits me best !
> Sad, sad we are; sad, sad shall ever be.
> What shall deliver us from Love's unrest,
> And bonds we did not forecast, did not see ?
>
> If, Love, the night fall on us, dark of hope,
> Let us be true, whatever else may be;
> Let us be strong, and without waver cope
> With heavy dooms, dooms we could not foresee !

There are, perhaps, those whose austerity of mind and habit entitles them to judge this tormented man with strict morality, but for most of us, frail and wayward and hard to understand, there must be compassion in our judgment of one who endured and dared and needed much. Davitt, no doubt, was entitled to describe him as "a cold-blooded sensualist," but when we have pronounced all our judgments, whether they be harsh or compassionate, this remains, that Parnell, the aristocrat, could dare and do what Davitt, the peasant, could never in this world have dared or done. No one, however casually he reads the story of Michael Davitt's life, can withhold from him affection and high esteem, but the severity of Nature will not permit her to be diverted from her way; and in the way of Nature it was ordained that the Anglo-Irish Parnell should be the master of the Irish Davitt, even as in the way of Nature it was ordained that the English Gladstone should be the master of the Anglo-Irish Parnell.

IV

The agitation, which was vigorously conducted in Ireland —500,000 persons joined the Land League—was now extended to Westminster, where Parnell, next to Gladstone, was the strongest member. A Bill to suspend Habeas Corpus in Ireland was introduced, with protestations of his reluctance to do so, by Mr. Forster on January 24, 1881. It was fiercely opposed by the Irish party, which kept the House continuously sitting from 4 p.m. on Tuesday until 2 p.m. on Wednesday. On January 31 an announcement was made by the Government that the debate would be closured that night. The uproar was terrific, and the House was kept continuously sitting from 4 p.m. on Monday until 9 a.m. on Wednesday—for forty-one continuous hours. The Irish

spoke incessantly, "sometimes rising," said Mr. Gladstone, "to the level of mediocrity, and more often grovelling amidst mere trash in unbounded profusion." This contemptuous account of their oratory would not gravely have disconcerted them, for obstruction was their business, not the production of fine rhetoric. On Wednesday morning the Speaker, Mr. Brand, who controlled an extremely difficult situation with remarkable skill and firmness, announced that he had resolved to stop all further discussion of the Bill, and to call upon the members to decide on the question of the first reading. Parnell was not in the House, and the Irish members, completely nonplussed by the Speaker's announcement, allowed the Bill to be read for the first time. This was one of many instances when they showed themselves unable to make a decision without his leadership. He had gone to rest for an hour or two. On his return to the House, his irresolute and dismayed followers rallied.

When the Speaker took the chair on Wednesday afternoon, Mr. Labouchere asked him on what authority he had acted that morning. The Speaker replied, "I acted on my own responsibility, and from a sense of duty to the House." Nobody cheered more lustily on hearing that reply than the aged Mr. Gladstone. When the applause had subsided, Parnell rose and asked whether it would be proper for him to propose a resolution that the Speaker had been guilty of a breach of the privileges of the House, and was informed that he might bring forward his resolution, not on a question of privilege, but on a question of order. There was a further exchange of questions and answers, cheered and countercheered by a House rapidly becoming more and more excited, and ending with a motion by Mr. Sullivan for adjournment. The debate on this motion lasted until a quarter to six in the evening, during which time, of course, the ordinary business of the Government was held up. Then the House

adjourned, leaving the Irish, who had seemed to be defeated in the morning, victors at night.

The Government now resolved to devise a means of overcoming this particular form of obstruction, and they proposed a rule that if a motion declaring business urgent should be supported by forty members, the motion should forthwith be put to the vote. Before the debate on the resolution began, Sir William Harcourt announced that Michael Davitt had been arrested for violating the conditions of his ticket-of-leave. Parnell enquired what these conditions were, but was not answered. Mr. Gladstone then rose to move his resolution, but Mr. Dillon demanded more information about Davitt's arrest. The Speaker called on Mr. Gladstone, but Dillon refused to give way. He was immediately " named " by the Speaker and suspended. He refused to withdraw, and was removed by the Sergeant-at-Arms. Mr. Gladstone again rose to move his resolution, and immediately he did so Mr. Parnell moved " that the right honourable gentleman be no longer heard." This audacious proposal threw the House into a state of intense excitement and confusion. Parnell was " named " and suspended, and so were thirty-two of his colleagues. Other members of the Irish party were sent for, and each of them, as Mr. Gladstone rose to speak, moved that he be no longer heard, and was " named " and suspended. Amid such scenes as these, Mr. Forster, still protesting that it wrung his heart to propose Coercion, succeeded in passing his Bill. And while these wrangles and angry arguments and namings and suspendings were carried on at Westminster, peasants starved in Connaught and Sir George Colley was preparing the disaster of Majuba Hill. Twenty-two sittings of the House of Commons were occupied by the debate on Coercion. Fifty-eight sittings were occupied by the debate on the Land Bill which followed the passing of Coercion. The whole of that session consumed 1,400 hours, of which

240 were after midnight. Out of 14,836 speeches delivered in the Commons that session, 6,315 were delivered by Irish members. "Mr. Parnell," the Speaker noted, "with his minority of twenty-four dominates the House."

Mr. Forster got Habeas Corpus suspended, and promptly jailed without trial hundreds of Land Leaguers. But the Land League remained, and Lord Cowper, the Viceroy, wondered whether it ought not to be suppressed. He thought that the leaders, meaning Parnell, ought to be arrested. At that moment, however, the Cabinet were not in the temper for more arrests or suppressions. They had a Land Bill to pass, and Lord Cowper's counsels of despair could not be heard with patience until it had been passed. When the Bill was brought into the House it was found to be a better Bill than any of the Irishmen had expected. It put them in a difficulty. They did not desire to seem pleased by it, nor did they wish to jeopardise its passage into law. Parnell decided that they should not vote for the second reading. The Bill was safe in the Commons, so their abstention would not injure it and would leave them free to disclaim responsibility for it if anything went wrong. But he practised wiliness in committee. "Whenever the measure was in danger the Parnellites came to the rescue. When it was safe they criticised and objected, and, it must be allowed, improved the Bill."[1] It became law on August 22, 1881. "In 1880," said Mr. Standish O'Grady, "Ireland was owned by the landlords; in 1881, Ireland was owned by the tenants. The Cabinet yielded before the cabin." Mr. O'Grady spoke with picturesque exaggeration, but substantially he was right. And for that result Ireland had to thank the Land League, whose founder, Davitt, at that moment was again languishing in jail.

[1] *Life of Charles Stewart Parnell*, by R. Barry O'Brien, vol. i., p. 296.

V

Parnell now felt in need of a newspaper. Mr. Edward Dwyer Gray, who owned the *Freeman's Journal*, was not friendly to him or his policy, and had made and fomented trouble for him over a dispute about the Irish University Bill, during which the words "Papist rats" escaped from someone's mouth and were attributed to Parnell. Parnell, supported by a number of his Catholic colleagues, denied that he had uttered them, but Mr. Gray, supported by a number of his friends, maintained that he had; and the Irish capacity for raising a shindy about a trifle almost caused a crisis in the party. On this occasion, it may be noted, Parnell, who had his family's predilection for Papists, or, rather, their desire that justice should be done to them, wished to demand the full Catholic claim for a University, whereas Mr. Gray's friends were willing to accept the Government offer of a mere examining board, miscalled a University. The *Freeman's Journal* was a very influential paper,[1] and Parnell realised that he must have a friendlier organ at his service if he was to keep the Irish public informed of his purpose.

A group of assorted weeklies flourished then, as now, in Dublin, all of them professing highly patriotic and noble sentiments, although some of them were conceived in the gutter in which they were chiefly sold, and were entirely scabrous in character. Three of them, the *Irishman*, the *Shamrock*, and the *Flag of Ireland*, were owned by a perpetually impoverished Mr. Pigott, who was destined eight years later to be a principal conspirator in the attempt to charge Parnell with complicity in crime.

Richard Pigott was born about the year 1828, probably at Ratoath, County Meath. He began his earning life as an errand-boy in the office of the *Nation*; and subsequently

[1] It was a victim of patriotic fervour from 1916 to 1924, and in the latter year ceased publication.

became a clerk in the office in Belfast of the *Ulsterman*, which was afterwards named the *Irishman* and transferred to Dublin. Pigott became manager, and eventually owner, of this paper as well as of the *Shamrock* and the *Flag of Ireland*. He was a shiftless, moon-faced man who fell into villainy not so much because he was vicious as because he was incompetent. Generations of mean and flabby ancestors must have gone to the making of this man, whose capacity for crawling servility and obsequious deference gave him the right to claim spiritual descent from Uriah Heep. His big, round head was tangled at its base with bushy beard, and his forehead jutted out as if it had started on the road to nobility but had failed to get there. He wore a monocle screwed into his right eye, and he had a trick, when in doubt, of putting his hand to his mouth and holding his lip. His penury kept him continually on the hunt for money, and he plunged like a bewildered elephant from mess to mess, cadging at one moment from the Government and at the next from their enemies, and lying to each with ineptitude that was nearly innocence. Mr. Forster was easy prey. Pigott persuaded him to believe that all his efforts in the press had been to keep the peace in Ireland, and make the way of a Chief Secretary agreeable and pleasant; and Mr. Forster, though he could not accede to Pigott's modest demand for £1,500, or, failing that, £1,000, was moved enough by the man's plea of poverty incurred in a righteous cause to give him £100 out of his private purse. This sum was supplemented at a later date by a gift of £50 to enable him to go to America. He did not go.

Pigott was a sworn member of the Republican Brotherhood, and had served a sentence of six months in Kilmainham for an article which he had published, but not written, on the Manchester Martyrs. (Its author was the late Dr. George Sigerson, who died in Dublin in February, 1925.) He

subsequently served a sentence of four months for another political offence. He was, perhaps, the most notorious and distrusted man in Dublin, always engaged in shady enterprises and walking perilously near the brink of blackmail, and yet, such is the singularity of human nature, undeniably an affectionate and devoted father to his four motherless children. There was no act of mean villainy to which Richard Pigott was not prepared to stoop; he was a blackmailer, a forger, a swindler, a thief, and a purveyor of indecent books and photographs; yet there can be few virtuous men in the world who love their children more deeply than he loved his. He was in one of the more acute crises of his finances when Parnell came purchasing papers; and the offer of a substantial sum for his precarious papers, drawn from the funds of the Land League which he had so assiduously opposed, must have been a godsend to him. Parnell formed the Irish National Newspaper and Publishing Company, Limited, and bought the *Shamrock*, the *Flag of Ireland*, which he renamed *United Ireland*, and the *Irishman*, which he afterwards suppressed.

VI

The passage of the Land Bill presented a pretty problem to Parnell. It was a more generous measure than any of the Irish members had expected, considering how troubled the Government was, not only by Ireland, but by South Africa. Mr. Gladstone's Cabinet had endured simultaneously with their Irish struggle the disasters of Laing's Nek, the Ingogo River, and Majuba Hill, where, as the calamitous conclusion to a calamitous campaign, General Colley was killed. Clearly, the Irish could not profitably endeavour to screw any more out of the Government at that time than the Government had unexpectedly offered them. On the other hand, they had to remember their extremists at home and in America, and must not appear too pleased with what they had got.

Parnell was always prepared to appear unreasonable or ungrateful in the eyes of the English, provided that he appeared reasonable and right in the eyes of the Irish, but he was not anxious to appear so unreasonable and ungrateful that the English would throw up the Land Bill or any other proposal to ameliorate life in Ireland on the plea that there was no contenting the Irish. His strategy at this time was devised for the purpose of keeping the English in good resolutions and the Fenians from imagining that the Parliamentary party was selling Irish liberty for a mess of farmer's pottage. How far he was successful is a matter of dispute. He himself and his biographer, Mr. Barry O'Brien, had no doubt that he was entirely successful, and they had much warrant for their belief; but Mr. Gladstone and his colleagues felt convinced that Parnell was trying to wreck the Land Bill, and that is a conviction which does not promote good administration.

"Parnell," says Mr. O'Brien,[1] "was resolved not to quarrel with his American allies, whose contributions filled the coffers of the League. On the other hand, he determined that the Land Act should not be made a dead letter. . . . What course, then, was he to pursue so that the farmers might reap the full benefit of the Land Act and his American friends be appeased? He determined to adopt his old tactics of drawing the fire of the English enemy on himself, believing that while English statesmen and publicists blazed at him from every quarter his influence in Ireland and America would be unimpaired. Next, he determined that the tenants should be prevented from rushing precipitously into the Land Courts, and from abandoning all agitation henceforth. . . . He believed that the reduction of rents would be in exact proportion to the pressure which the League could bring to bear upon the commissioners."

He urged that, instead of an indiscriminate rush of tenants

[1] *Life of Charles Stewart Parnell*, vol. i., p. 302.

to the Land Courts, certain test cases should be conducted there by the Land League, these test cases to be selected not from the most rack-rented tenants, but from those whose rents had hitherto not been considered cruel or exorbitant. His party were not entirely in agreement with him, but he overruled them. The Americans, however, had to be humbugged with the pretence that these test cases were to be conducted for the purpose of exposing "the hollowness of the Act." Mr. Gladstone considered that Parnell was deliberately wrecking the Act, and he warned him at Leeds on October 8, 1881, that "the resources of civilisation against its enemies are not yet exhausted." Parnell "desires," said the aged Premier, "to arrest the operation of the Land Act; to stand as Moses stood between the living and the dead; to stand there, not as Moses stood, to arrest, but to spread the plague." Mr. Forster, who incessantly carried gloomy forebodings from Dublin to London, now raised the tone in which he urged that Parnell should be arrested. If Parnell's strategy at this time was sound—and many persons not in his camp thought that it was, not indeed at first, but afterwards—then Heaven could not have arranged that a more suitable person than Mr. Forster should be Chief Secretary for Ireland. It was a pity that the sole information received by the harassed Cabinet from Ireland should have been brought to them by the plodding, but imperceptive, Mr. Forster; but, on the other hand, since Parnell earnestly desired to divert American attention from the Land Act to himself, it was fortunate that Mr. Forster was there and equally desirous of putting Parnell in the centre of the stage.

But if one ranges one's mind beyond the immediate success of this or that event in a series of events, one finds a doubt inserting itself in one's thoughts. Amazing was the success with which Parnell diverted the Irish-American mind from the Land Act to himself. He went to Wexford and said,

on October 9, the day after Mr. Gladstone had spoken at Leeds: "You have gained something by your exertions during the last twelve months; but I am here to-day to tell you that you have gained but a fraction of that to which you are entitled. And the Irishman who thinks he can now throw away his arms, just as Grattan disbanded the volunteers in 1783, will find to his sorrow and destruction when too late that he has placed himself in the power of the perfidious and cruel and relentless English enemy. . . . It is a good sign that the masquerading knight-errant, this pretending champion of the rights of every other nation except those of the Irish nation, should be obliged to throw off the mask to-day, and stand revealed as the man who, by his own utterances, is prepared to carry fire and sword into your homesteads, unless you humbly abase yourselves before him and before the landlords of the country."

There was more in the same strain, none of it seeming seditious to the modern reader or any more than a politician is entitled to say to the singular people who attend political meetings; but it was enough for Mr. Forster and enough for Mr. Gladstone, who, perhaps, disliked being called a masquerading knight-errant. The Cabinet met on Wednesday, October 12, 1881, and decided, after deliberating for five hours, to send Parnell to prison under the Coercion Act. The Chief Secretary had arranged with Sir Thomas Steele, the Commander-in-Chief of the Forces in Ireland, that if the Cabinet consented to Parnell's arrest, he would wire the word "proceed" to him, and now the jubilant Mr. Forster, blissfully doing what Parnell wished him to do, telegraphed to Sir Thomas, and Parnell was arrested at Morrison's Hotel at half-past eight on Thursday morning, October 13. The diversion for America had been made, but perhaps a doubt of its worth was in Parnell's mind, for on the previous Sunday, after his Wexford meeting was over, he sat at supper with

two of his colleagues, one of whom, after much hesitation, timorously asked: "Suppose they arrest you, Mr. Parnell; have you any instructions to give us?" Mr. Parnell looked through the glass of champagne he had raised to his lips, and said: "Ah, if I am arrested, Captain Moonlight will take my place." And Captain Moonlight did. It would seem that Parnell anticipated the advent of Captain Moonlight with pleasure, and perhaps at the moment he did, but there must have been a doubt in his mind. He did not like Captain Moonlight.

VII

The news of his arrest filled England with joy and Ireland with grief and dismay. The freedom of London was being conferred upon Mr. Gladstone a few hours after Parnell's arrest, and the old Premier, after the feasting at the Guildhall, rose and announced that "even within these few moments I have been informed that towards the vindication of law and order, of the rights of property, of the freedom of the land, of the first elements of political life and civilisation, the first step has been taken in the arrest of the man who, unhappily, from motives which I do not challenge, which I cannot examine, and with which I have nothing to do, has made himself beyond all others prominent in the attempt to destroy the authority of the law, and to substitute what would end in being nothing more or less than anarchical oppression exercised upon the people of Ireland." The Lord Mayor and Aldermen and Common Councillors of the City of London there and then assembled, with their wives and guests, rose and almost rent the roof with their roaring cheers. "Parnell's arrest," wrote Sir Thomas Wemyss Reid, the biographer of Mr. Forster, "was hailed almost as though it had been the news of a signal victory gained by England over a hated and formidable enemy." The miseries of Majuba Hill were now forgotten, nor did the disasters of

Laing's Nek and the Ingogo River haunt the thoughts of those fatted Aldermen who cheered when Parnell was put in prison. Meanwhile, the peasants in the west continued to starve.

Wisdom is easy for us who have only to look back; it was hard for them who had then to look forward; but what a load of mischief might have been lifted from the world's back if Parnell had defied the American Fenians in 1881, and Mr. Gladstone had not listened so eagerly to Mr. Forster. While Mr. Gladstone, post-prandially eloquent, was announcing the arrest to his delighted audience in London, Parnell himself, through an interviewer from the *Freeman's Journal*, was informing the Irish people that he would " take it as evidence that the people of the country did not do their duty " if he were " speedily released." He hated outrage, but this remark reads uncommonly like incitement to it. We may, according to our way of thinking, regard it as an incitement to greater violence or as a warning to the Government that they were making a mistake in removing from authority the one man who could control the Irish talent for outrage. But whether we regard it in the first way or in the second, the second way proved to be a fact. The agitation was now conducted by men and women to whom excess was success. Miss Anna Parnell considered herself especially appointed to see that " the country did their duty," and soon a mob of fanatical women was careering up and down Ireland, rousing the wrath of hungry peasants and provoking them to the commission of what Mr. John Parnell calls " an exceptional outburst of murders—some of them for the slightest causes "—which " were making the year 1882 memorable even in the blood-stained annals of agrarian outrage."[1] Whatever hope the Cabinet had that Parnell's arrest would cause the campaign of violence to end was soon dissipated. Parnell in prison was as powerful as

[1] *Charles Stewart Parnell*, by J. H. Parnell, p. 206.

Parnell out of it—in some respects more powerful—with this difference, that he could not see what his countrymen were doing. Ballad-singers appeared in every gutter, singing songs about the chief, and some of the best "come-all-ye's" that were ever made in the back streets of Dublin were made about his imprisonment. One of them achieved great popularity. It was called "Could Kilmainham Jail," and ran thus:

Come, all ye gallant Irishmen, and listen to my song,
Whilst I a story do relate of England's cruel wrong.
Before this wrong all other wrongs of Ireland do grow pale,
For they've clapped the pride of Erin's Isle into could Kilmainham Jail.

It was the tyrant Gladstone, and he said unto himself,
"I nivir will be aisy till Parnell is on the shelf.
So make the warrant out in haste and take it by the mail,
And we'll clap the pride of Erin's Isle into could Kilmainham Jail."

So Buckshot[1] took the warrant and he buttoned up his coat,
And tuk the train to Holyhead to catch the Kingstown boat.
The weather it was rather rough, and he was feeling queer,
When Mallon and the polis came to meet him on the pier.

But soundly slept the patriot, for he was kilt wid work,
Haranguing of the multitudes in Limerick and Cork,
Till Mallon and the polis came and rung the front-door bell,
Disturbing of his slumbers in bould Morrison's Hotel.

Then up and spoke bould Morrison, "Get up, yer sowl, and run!"
Oh, bright shall shine in Hist'ry's page the name of Morrison!
"To see the pride of Erin jailed I never could endure!
Slip on your boots—I'll let ye out upon the kitchen door."

But proudly flashed the patriot's eye as he bouldly answered, "No,
It'll never be said that Parnell turned his back to face the foe!
Parnell aboo for liberty—sure it's all the same," says he,
"For Mallon has locked the kitchen door and taken away the key."

[1] A nickname given to Mr. Forster.

They tuk him and they bound him, them minions of the law.
'Twas Pat, the boots, was there that night and tould me all he saw.
But sorra a step the patriot bould would leave the place until
They granted him a ten per cent. reduction on his bill.

Had I been there with odds at my back of two hundred men to one,
It makes my blood run could to think of the deeds that I'd have done.
'Tisn't here that I'd be telling you this melancholy tale,
How they clapped the pride of Erin's Isle into could Kilmainham Jail.

Orators had only to mention the name of the chief to stimulate the hearts of their auditors. They had only to picture him in prison, to set those hearts beating with rage. And since every man and woman then endeavoured to stir the emotions to the point of ferocity, and no one endeavoured to keep them within the boundaries of civilised behaviour, the passions of the peasants soon passed beyond humanity. The Land League retorted to the Government, which had imprisoned its President, by issuing a No-Rent Manifesto, which Parnell reluctantly sanctioned. His feeling, which Mr. Dillon, then also in Kilmainham, shared, was that a strike against the payment of rent would be condemned by the Church. The vote of those present in prison was taken on the issue of the manifesto, and a majority of them decided that it should be issued. It was published in *United Ireland* on October 17, 1881, over the following signatures:

Charles S. Parnell, President, Kilmainham Jail.
A. J. Kettle, Honorary Secretary, Kilmainham Jail.
Michael Davitt, Honorary Secretary, Portland Prison.
Thomas Brennan, Honorary Secretary, Kilmainham Jail.
Thomas Sexton, Head Organiser, Kilmainham Jail.
Patrick Egan, Treasurer, Paris.

But the No-Rent Manifesto was a fiasco. The Church, as Parnell and Dillon had anticipated, could not sanction this repudiation of debt, and the priests and Bishops condemned

it. The people themselves ignored it. The cynical may discover something singular in a people who would not repudiate their rent, because to do so would be a sin, yet were prepared to maim cattle and murder their landlords without a qualm. The No-Rent Manifesto provided the Government with an excuse for suppressing the Land League, which was done; but Miss Parnell's band of harridans took its place.

VIII

Parnell's life in prison was not unpleasant. He had companions of his own way of thinking, and was able to carry on a great deal, not only of his personal business, but of his political propaganda. He wrote and received letters, both openly and secretly, and was allowed many visitors. An attempt was made to prove that his imprisonment seriously affected his health, but the attempt was a poor one and without justification. To say this is not to approve of his imprisonment, but to state a palpable fact. It is more likely that Parnell derived benefit from his stay in Kilmainham than that he was injured by it. He needed rest, and he got it; he needed exercise, and he got it; he needed time to think, and he got it; he needed segregation from Mrs. O'Shea, and he got it. One might conclude that this tired and overwrought man would have gained still more had be been more restricted during his period of imprisonment, receiving fewer visitors and fewer letters. His mind was troubled more on Mrs. O'Shea's account than on Ireland's, for she was five months gone with child by him when he was arrested, and her letters, open and smuggled, caused him deep anxiety. We may believe that she herself was in an abnormal state of mind, even for a pregnant woman, for not only was she carrying a child whose father was in jail, but she had to conceal from her husband the fact that the child was not his.

We may not gloss over this part of the story. Mrs. O'Shea has herself revealed it without any attempt at palliation to her readers. Captain O'Shea, according to his wife, firmly believed that the unborn child was his. Its birth was expected in February, 1882, and " he thought February would seal our reconciliation, whereas I knew it would cement the cold hatred I felt towards him, and consummate the love I bore my child's father."[1] " Willie was very good; I told him my baby was dying, and I must be left alone. He had no suspicion of the truth, and only stipulated that the child should be baptised at once—urged thereto, I think, by his mother and sister. I had no objection to this. Parnell and I had long before agreed that it would be safer to have the child christened as a Catholic, and he had no feeling at all against the Catholic religion, considering, indeed, that for those who required a religion it was an admirable one."[2]

This is not an episode for which, in Christian morality, we can discover an excuse. The present writer firmly believes that Parnell and Mrs. O'Shea deeply and devotedly loved each other, and that Mrs. O'Shea tenderly cherished and nursed him. He believes, too, that an immense amount of hypocritical and nauseous nonsense was spoken and written about the divorce suit. Parnell did not in any reasonable sense of the word break up a happy home or betray a devoted husband. Had these two ill-starred lovers lived thirty years later than they did, there would not have been much, if any, fuss made about their divorce. But to acknowledge all this is not to acknowledge that one can feel anything but disgust at the thought that one man was being deluded into the belief that he was the father of another man's baby. The disgust deepens at the thought that Mrs. O'Shea allowed herself to endure a physical relationship with her husband

[1] *Charles Stewart Parnell*, by Katharine O'Shea, vol. i., p. 210.

[2] *Ibid.*, vol. i., p. 244.

which, according to her own faith, should have been enjoyed only by Parnell. The lovers clearly were not prepared for open avowal of their relationship because of the political responsibilities which depended upon Parnell. He was now nearly at the apex of his career, and firmly convinced that he was destined to achieve Home Rule for Ireland. The revelation of his relationship with a married woman would, as in fact it did, prevent him from winning this victory for his country, and even deprive his country of it altogether or for a prolonged period. The rigid moralist will say, that being so, he should have withdrawn from the relationship, but the rigid moralist is hardly in a position to judge these matters, since he has probably never had to endure such a test. Man is a wayward being, and prone to mischance, and when he is involved in concrete passions he rarely stops to think about abstract principles. This much is certain, that the political consequences of a blunt avowal of their relationship weighed heavily on their judgment, and caused Parnell and Mrs. O'Shea to conceal what otherwise they would probably have revealed.

Some endeavour to excuse this incident by a denial of Captain O'Shea's ignorance, and they bring forward in support of their disbelief the fact that Mrs. O'Shea, before the divorce suit was heard, actually proposed to plead that her husband had connived at her adultery with Parnell and was himself guilty of adultery with her sister. But that plea was not maintained, and we must accept her subsequent assertion, made thirty-two years after the birth of Parnell's baby, that O'Shea believed, and had cause to believe, that the child was his. It is unlikely that a sane woman would deliberately blacken the character of the man to whom she remained devoted until the end of her life if she were not stating the truth. There is no way out of this miserable business, unless we are prepared to assert that a high and

undeniable devotion excuses everything. We fall back on the fact that in these matters neither men nor women stop to examine the tables of morality, and that a man's worth to the world is not rigidly to be measured by the yard-length of law. It was puerilely argued at the time of the divorce that Parnell could not be trusted in anything because he had lapsed in this, and that, therefore, his value to Ireland disappeared on the day when he first seduced Mrs. O'Shea! To say that is as much as to say that a man cannot be trusted to drive a motor-car because on one occasion he was caught stealing his friend's cigars. It certainly does not become Irishmen, who boggle so little at murder, to boggle so much at adultery.

Parnell's letters to Mrs. O'Shea are tedious to the general reader, who, however, has no right to complain of this, for they were not intended for his eyes. They are the ordinary, anxious love-letters which a man, without much gift for expression, might write from the cell of a political offender to his wife during her pregnancy. He addresses her by the fond diminutives that are customary among lovers. She is "Queenie" and he is "Your King." He calls her his "own darling wifie" and his "own queenie"—all very banal, no doubt, and not quite in the highest political tradition, but all very common and human. He is worried because she is worried, and full of concern lest her apprehensions about him should bring danger to the baby. "My only fear is about my darling Queenie. I have been racked with torture all to-day, last night, and yesterday, lest the shock of my arrest may have hurt you or our child. Oh, darling, write soon or wire me as soon as you get this that you are well again and will try not to be unhappy until you see your husband again. You may wire me here. I have your beautiful face with me here; it is such a comfort. I kiss it every morning. Your King." When he receives letters

from her in which she yields to her despair and fear, he replies that he is in the mind to throw up his political career and spend the rest of his life with her. "But, my darling, you frighten me dreadfully when you tell me that I am 'surely killing' you and our child. . . . Rather than that my beautiful Wifie should run any risk I will resign my seat, leave politics, and go away somewhere with my own Queenie as soon as she wishes; will she come? Let me know, darling, in your next about this, whether it is safe for you that I should be kept here any longer. Your own Husband." "My own darling Queenie,—Nothing in the world is worth the risk of any harm or injury to you. How could I ever live without my own Katie? And if you are in danger, my darling, I will go to you at once. . . ." She recovers from her despair, and he answers her more reasonable note with the assertion that "I could not very well make any arrangement or enter into any undertaking with Government unless I retired altogether from politics. Your letter has relieved me very much. I have been dreadfully frightened about you for the last week. . . ."

These letters were addressed to her two months before she was delivered of her daughter. Mr. O'Hara, in his very able book, *Chief and Tribune: Parnell and Davitt*, deals with them in a curiously ungenerous and undiscerning way. He scoffs at their puerilities, and is indignant with Parnell for proposing to end his political career for Mrs. O'Shea. Is this not to display lack of imagination and understanding? Mrs. O'Shea was, in Parnell's eyes, though, perhaps, in the eyes of no one else, his wife. She was about to bear a child to him, and was in that state of emotion which is common to most pregnant women a month or two before confinement. Her husband, as she considered him, was in prison, and she had no knowledge of when he would be released; for it must be borne in mind that he had not been tried, nor had he been

sentenced to any term of imprisonment. Habeas Corpus had been suspended, and he was to remain in Kilmainham or elsewhere for so long as it pleased Her Majesty's Government. In these circumstances, will anyone with the smallest pretension to knowledge of human nature maintain that there was anything disgraceful to Parnell in his cry of pain when he received Mrs. O'Shea's overwrought letters? If Irishmen, as their condemnation of Parnell at this time would seem to imply, are so devoted to abstractions that they can only find something contemptible in a man who reveals in a moment of weakness that he can suffer and relapse, then we may rest assured that a race of abstract thinkers can only create a nation which is an abstraction and not a reality.

IX

The bent of Parnell's mind, apart from politics, will be seen in the list of papers which he regularly read while he was in Kilmainham. They were *The Times*, *Engineer*, *Engineering*, *Mining Journal*, *Pall Mall Gazette*, and *Universe*. What malignancy of fate, one wonders, drew this man from his assays and engineering experiments and his study of the stars into the restless puddle of Irish politics? A happy life at Avondale, where he might experiment to his heart's content, offered itself to him, but the dark shadow which had lain upon his family for generations drove him away from it, and rarely allowed him to return.

CHAPTER VII

THE PHŒNIX PARK MURDERS

I

MRS. O'SHEA'S baby was born on February 16, 1882, and died on April 21 of the same year. The child was a girl, and was named Claude Sophie, the first name being a compliment to Lord Truro, an old friend of her mother, and the second, given on her father's suggestion, a compliment to Sophia Parnell (Mrs. MacDermott), who had died in 1877 at the age of thirty-three. "It was the name of one of my sisters whom I was said to be most like of the family."[1] Parnell saw the child before she died owing to the following circumstances: His nephew, Henry, the only child of Mrs. Livingston Thomson, who was a musician in Paris, led a solitary life which established his kinship with the reclusive Parnells. He contracted an illness which was discovered by his parents only by accident. They thought at first that it was trivial, but "the fever went to his head, and after a week's constant delirium the poor fellow died. He used to devote himself entirely to music, composing, etc., and it is thought that his brain was injured or weakened by dwelling too much upon this one subject, and so was unable to withstand disease."[2]

The death of this young man provided the Government with an excuse for releasing Parnell on parole, so that he might go to Paris and attend this nephew's funeral. The Cabinet now realised that they had not improved the Irish situation by jailing its controller. Mr. Forster brought them "the gloomiest" reports from Ireland. "The Land Act had brought no improvement. In the south-west and many of the midland counties lawlessness and intimidation were

[1] *Charles Stewart Parnell*, by Katharine O'Shea, vol. i., pp. 242-245.
[2] *Life of Charles Stewart Parnell*, by R. Barry O'Brien, vol. i., p. 324.

worse than ever. Returns of agrarian crime were presented in every shape, and comparisons framed by weeks, by months, by quarters; do what the statisticians would, and in spite of fluctuations, murders and other serious outrages had increased. The policy of arbitrary arrest had completely failed, and the officials and crown lawyers at the Castle were at their wits' end."[1] This was in April, 1882. Mr. Gladstone had tried, but failed, in the previous December to use the Pope as a means of pacifying the Irish Papists. The Pope could influence the Irish only when they wanted to be influenced by him.

Now, four months later, Mr. Gladstone endeavoured to do what he ought to have done at the beginning, get into communication with Parnell, who was himself seriously perturbed at the state into which Ireland was drifting. The Government, indeed, were so embarrassed by the imprisonment of Parnell at this time that arrangements were made to allow him to " escape " or to be " rescued." There was a rumour that he was to be transferred from Kilmainham to Armagh—with a " rescue " during the journey—and on at least one occasion warders ostentatiously looked the other way when it would have been easy for Parnell to walk out of the prison. But Parnell was too astute for " escapes " and " rescues," and he did not take the chances of escape which the officials obligingly provided for him. But during his period of parole he went to Eltham, both before and after his visit to Paris, where he saw Captain O'Shea. Three Irish members had met him before his journey to Eltham, and he had discussed with them a means of relieving the situation. At Eltham he informed Captain O'Shea of his opinions, and O'Shea transmitted them to Mr. Gladstone, who, in turn, transmitted them to Mr. Forster with a suggestion that something should be done about them. Captain

[1] *Life of Gladstone,* by John Morley, bk. viii., chap. iv., sect. 8.

O'Shea, who is referred to in Morley's *Life of Gladstone* in this connection as "an Irish member" and "the emissary," astutely sent a copy of the letter he had written to Mr. Gladstone to Mr. Joseph Chamberlain, who disliked Mr. Forster and had been opposed to Coercion. The relations between Mr. Chamberlain and O'Shea were unusual. Mr. Chamberlain seems to have used him as a means of obtaining information, and this fact, perhaps, accounts for the belief held by some people that O'Shea's mysterious occupation was that of a spy. There is, however, no particular warrant for this belief. On April 21 Parnell returned to Eltham from Paris, and sat up late in the dining-room discussing the terms of what was subsequently known as the "Kilmainham Treaty." Upstairs, in Mrs. O'Shea's room, the little Claude Sophie was dying. O'Shea and Parnell, the reputed and the real father of the dying girl, worked until daylight, and then went to lie down for a few hours' rest before Parnell started on his journey back to Kilmainham. As Parnell stole into the bedroom to bid good-bye to Mrs. O'Shea and his daughter, the baby died. Her age was nine weeks. She was buried in the Catholic cemetery at Chislehurst, but her father was back in Kilmainham when the funeral took place.

The "Kilmainham Treaty" was the subject of much acrimonious dispute, but the broad fact is that both the Liberals and the Tories were sick of Coercion and the outrages which it provoked rather than stopped. There was no treaty in the formal sense, but there was some sort of an agreement between Parnell and Mr. Gladstone, to which Mr. Chamberlain was a party, that in return for a Bill dealing with the tenant-farmers who were in arrears of rent and unable to pay them he would do his utmost to end the campaign of violence. The prisoners in Kilmainham under the Coercion Act were to be released, and the Land Act was to be amended. Mr. Forster was quite willing to deal

with the arrears of rent in the way suggested, but he strongly objected to the release of Parnell. The Cabinet, however, decided that Parnell had been in prison long enough, and Mr. Forster resigned his office. The Viceroy, Lord Cowper, had resigned immediately before Mr. Forster had done so, and was succeeded by Lord Spencer, who, unlike Lord Cowper, had Cabinet rank. Mr. Morley thinks that Mr. Forster " probably felt that the appointment of a Viceroy of Cabinet rank and with successful Irish experience was, in fact, his own supersession."[1] Mr. Forster's successor was Lord Frederick Cavendish, the husband of one of Mrs. Gladstone's nieces.

II

When Parnell walked out of Kilmainham Jail in May, 1882, he did so in the knowledge that he had fought the Irish Executive and beaten them. Mr. Gladstone, who had stirred the Guildhall audience to loud cheers seven months earlier by his announcement of Parnell's arrest, was now the active agent in procuring Parnell's release. Lord Cowper and Mr. Forster, who had demanded his incarceration, were permitted to leave the Cabinet because they demanded that his incarceration should continue. " If England cannot govern the honourable member for Cork," said Mr. Forster, " then let us acknowledge that he is the greatest power in all Ireland to-day." The acknowledgement was made. He was, indeed, the uncrowned king of Ireland. His age was thirty-six, and he had been in Parliament for seven years.

III

The drama now gains pace. There are only nine more years to run, and the Sardonic Dramatist has much to do. On May 4, 1882, Mr. Forster told the House of Commons

[1] *Life of Gladstone*, by John Morley, bk. viii., chap. iv., sect. 8.

why he had resigned from his office. As he reached the words, " There are two warrants which I signed in regard to the member for the city of Cork . . .," Parnell entered the House. He was not a man who chose dramatic moments for entering assemblies, but one who made drama by being present; but he could not have chosen a more exciting moment than that for his return to the Commons. The Irish members loudly cheered him, so that the unfortunate Mr. Forster, for ever being frustrated by Parnell, could not be heard finishing his sentence. Parnell bowed to the Speaker, took his place, and, later, joined in the debate. All the prospects were fair. The Government was in the mood to be conciliatory, and Parnell, urged to it, so she says, by Mrs. O'Shea,[1] was similarly minded. There might now be peace.

But that period in prison, when the head of the Irish people was removed from his place of authority, had been the happy hunting-time of fierce and fanatical patriots. Miss Anna Parnell had frequently been rebuked by her brother while he was in Kilmainham for her mischievous activities, but there were darker spirits than hers abroad, of whose existence he did not know. The Sardonic Dramatist was hurrying them up from the slums of Dublin to undo the kindly work that had been done by Gladstone and Parnell. On May 6, 1882, the new Viceroy, Lord Spencer, made his state entry into Dublin, accompanied by the new Chief Secretary, Lord Frederick Cavendish. There had been a torchlight procession in Dublin on the previous evening to celebrate the enlargement of Parnell and Davitt—the latter had been released from Portland on May 4—but the crowd which assembled to greet the Lord-Lieutenant did so in a kindly mood. The reign of outrage had lasted too long, and the people, overcast by the shadow of crime and destitution, hoped that the new rulers would bring peace and prosperity

[1] *Charles Stewart Parnell*, by Katharine O'Shea, vol. i., p. 256.

with them. When the cavalcade had passed by, a group of ruffians who had formed themselves into a club to commit murder met in a public-house near the gates of the Lower Castle Yard.[1] They had planned to murder the Permanent Under-Secretary, Mr. Thomas Henry Burke, that evening. These were some of the wild beasts issuing from the recesses of the Celtic soul, men to whom murder was a lustful pleasure. They called themselves Invincibles, and professed a patriotism which left them indifferent to their own welfare, and, indeed, one must acknowledge that they could hardly have been thinking of themselves when they resolved on their murders. They may have received payment for their butchery—they probably did—but it is likely that some of them were content with the pleasure they got from cutting throats.

They had been hot on Mr. Forster's scent for months, narrowly missing him on nineteen separate occasions. They had intended to murder Mr. Burke on the evening of the torchlight procession, but had missed him. They lay in wait for him on the next morning, but missed him again. And now, after the state procession, they were setting out a third time to find him. It is an odd commentary on the efficiency of the officials at Dublin Castle that they knew of the existence of this murder gang, but did not adequately watch them. Their successors at Dublin Castle were no less slack in 1916. The Invincibles divided themselves into two groups, and drove out, one group in a cab and the other on a jaunting-car, between five and six o'clock that Saturday in spring, to the Phœnix Park. In the Park the two groups again divided into more groups. One group was composed of two persons: James Carey, who subsequently informed on his accomplices; and a man called Smith, who knew Mr. Burke by sight and had been induced to come and point him out

[1] I have taken the details of the murder from Mr. O'Hara's *Chief and Tribune : Parnell and Davitt*, a book which deserves to be better known.

to the murderers. Carey was to signal to the actual assassins when the Under-Secretary arrived. "Higher up on the main road," says Mr. O'Hara, "on the footpath on the left-hand side, and directly opposite the Viceregal Lodge, the main body of the murderers assembled."

A polo match was being played in the Park, and Carey filled in the time of waiting by watching it. Lord Spencer himself, riding home from Dublin, stopped to watch the match. Hundreds of people were about on that clear afternoon. A short distance from where the waiting murderers lay on the grass an armed sentry paced up and down before the Lodge. . . .

Shortly after six o'clock Lord Frederick Cavendish left Dublin Castle, walked along the banks of the Liffey, and entered the Park. Soon after he had left the Castle, Mr. Burke also left it, and followed in the same direction as his chief. Outside the Park he hired a jaunting-car and drove towards his official residence. After he had passed the statue of Lord Gough he saw the Irish Secretary walking ahead, and he stopped his car, dismissed the driver, and continued on foot, his arm in Lord Frederick's. Smith and Carey, having recognised Mr. Burke, mounted an outside car and drove on to the place where the seven assassins were waiting, and told them how to recognise their victim. Then Smith was told to clear out, and Carey, soon afterwards, to join him. The time was now nearly half-past seven. Mr. Burke and Lord Frederick approached. They did not observe a band of men in a curious formation coming towards them. First came three men in a row, then came two rows of two men in each. As the parties, the murderers and their victims, met, an outside car with one passenger went by. The murderers allowed the victims to pass through them until the car had gone on its way, and then sharply turned about. A horrible ruffian called Brady went up to Mr.

Burke, put his right hand on his shoulder, and stabbed him with his left. That was at twenty minutes past seven. Mr. Burke fell to the ground, and as he did so Lord Frederick aimed a blow with his umbrella at Brady, who thereupon gashed him on the arm with his knife, followed him into the road, and stabbed him.

It was at this moment that two cyclists rode into the band of murderers. The light was hazy now, and the road was full of stones, so the cyclists, who were bothered by the difficulties of steering, did not realise what was happening. They rode straight through the tragedy, though one of them heard a cry, " Ah ! you villain," which helped to hang the Invincibles.

When Brady had stabbed Lord Frederick to death, he crossed the road to where Mr. Burke lay bleeding, and cut the dying man's throat. Then he wiped his knife on the grass, mounted the side-car on which three of his companions were already seated, and drove off. The murders had been committed in three minutes, and they were done publicly and without any attempt at concealment. Many persons actually saw them committed, but did not realise what was happening. They thought it was merely the usual Irish row. An officer was exercising his horse and dogs a few hundred yards from where two men, almost in daylight, were being stabbed to death, and, as we have noted, two cyclists rode into the band of murderers while they were slaying their victims. Yet none of these murderers were arrested for nearly a year after the crime was committed, although there must have been a mass of evidence available to convict them. The people who were standing by strolled up to where the two dead men lay on the ground, and what they saw was horrible.

IV

Parnell had gone to Weymouth to meet Michael Davitt on his release from Portland. All the way back to London he denounced the Ladies' Land League, whose activities, under his sister Anna, had alarmed him. Irish women, when they take to politics, have a capacity for fanaticism which is almost inhuman. A woman, called Byrne, carried the knives with which Lord Frederick Cavendish and Mr. Burke were murdered from London to Dublin. Parnell found them so in 1882; Mr. P. S. O'Hegarty, the candid friend of the Irish Free State, found them equally so in 1920.

"As the war lengthened," says Mr. O'Hegarty,[1] "it became more brutal and more savage and more hysterical and more unrelievedly black. But its worst effect was on the women. They were the first to be thrown off their base, and, as the war lengthened, they steadily deteriorated. They took to their hearts every catch-cry and every narrowness and every bitterness, and steadily eliminated from themselves every womanly feeling. . . . Cumann na mBhan, the women's organisation of the later Sinn Fein . . . organised itself on a 'military' basis, got itself uniforms, called itself 'Commandant' and 'Captain,' threw overboard construction and devoted itself to destruction. . . . Thus, in the worst phases of the war, Dublin was full of hysterical women, living on excitement, enjoying themselves in the thought of ambushes and *stunts*, stifling their consciences with the parrot cry, 'Nothing matters but to support the army.' . . . Just as, on the male side, the gunman came to be the dominant personality, so also his counterpart, the gunwoman, came to be the dominating figure of the woman's side of the movement. The gunwoman lived on war, on excitements, on stunts, and gradually shut out everything but those. She

[1] *The Victory of Sinn Fein*, by P. S. O'Hegarty, p. 56.

saw nobody, talked to nobody save other gunwomen, lived for nothing save war, and came at the last to be incapable of realising an Ireland without it. War, and the things which war breeds—intolerance, swagger, hardness, unwomanliness—captured the women, turned them into unlovely, destructive-minded, arid begetters of violence, both physical violence and mental violence."

The women of the Ladies' Land League were as fierce in their fanaticism as the women of the Cumann na mBhan. "The fanatic spirit in these ladies was extreme; in Anna Parnell it was abnormal, and Parnell saw no way of saving her or the country from her folly but by fulfilling his threat of vetoing the payment of another penny to the Ladies' Land League."[1]

They had some cause to feel fanatical. Among the magistrates with almost unlimited power whom Mr. Forster let loose on Ireland was an unsavoury ruffian called Clifford Lloyd, who ranged from place to place, spreading terror wherever he went. He cast decent women into prison for months at a time, where they were kept in solitary confinement for twenty-two out of every twenty-four hours. Women and children were violently, and sometimes indecently, assaulted by the police on the flimsiest pretexts. A lad was arrested for whistling; another lad was charged with using abusive language because he whistled a song entitled "Harvey Duff," in which the police were derided; a girl of twelve was bayoneted by a sub-constable because he heard her singing "Harvey Duff"; a boy of ten was arrested for carrying a lighted torch at two o'clock in the afternoon, and by this means drawing together an unlawful assembly of other lads, whose ages ranged from twelve to seventeen. Parnell did not deny that there had been the most extreme provocation offered to the Irish Ladies' Land League, but he had to look beyond immediate grievances and the woes of this or that

[1] *Charles Stewart Parnell*, by Katharine O'Shea, vol. i., p. 261.

individual to the integrity of a nation. His sister and her associates were raising forces which were rapidly becoming uncontrollable, and were in danger of out-Lloyding the incredible Lloyd.

This was the subject of his discourse with Davitt. How ironical it is that on the very day when Parnell was angrily denouncing outrage to his companion in the train from Weymouth, the Invincibles should be giving a horrible example of it in the Phœnix Park. "He spoke of anarchy," said Davitt afterwards, "as if he were a British Minister bringing in a Coercion Bill." On the following morning, Sunday, Mrs. O'Shea and Parnell drove to Blackheath Station from her house at Eltham to catch a train to London. He was going to see Davitt again. Mrs. O'Shea asked him to buy a paper for her. "From where I sat in the carriage I could see Parnell's back as he stood just inside the station door. I was watching him, and he half turned and smiled at me as he opened the paper—the *Sunday Observer*—to glance at the news before he brought it to me. He told me afterwards that he wanted to see what was said about Michael Davitt. He had now come to the top of the steps, and, as he suddenly stopped, I noticed a curious rigidity about his arms—raised in holding the newspaper open. He stood so absolutely still that I was suddenly frightened, horribly, sickeningly afraid of I knew not what, and, leaning forward, called out, 'King, what is it?' Then he came down the steps to me and, pointing to the headline, said, 'Look!' And I read, 'Murder of Lord Frederick Cavendish and Mr. Burke!' . . . His face was ashen, and he stared, frowning heavily before him, unconsciously crushing the hand I had slipped into his until the rings I wore cut and bruised my fingers. I said to him, 'Quick; you must catch this train. See Davitt and the others as arranged, and as many more as you can find. Go; you will know what to do, but you *must* meet them all

at once.' He turned heavily away, saying, 'I shall resign,' and I answered as I ran beside him to the platform, 'No, you are not a coward.'"[1]

He went up to the Westminster Palace Hotel and found Davitt. "He flung himself into a chair in my room," says Davitt, "and declared he would leave public life. 'How can I carry on a public agitation if I am stabbed in the back in this way?' He was wild. Talk of the calm and callous Parnell. There was not much calmness or callousness about him that morning." All the testimony supports Davitt's account of him on that Sunday morning. His brother John states that "the blow was a terrible one for Charley. He was completely unnerved. . . . It is certain that for once Charley completely lost his usual cool head, and allowed his nervous temperament, which as a rule he kept strictly under control, to dominate him completely for the time being. I know myself that for years after this horrible event preyed on his generous and sensitive nature, and I realised so well how even a slight reference by him to a matter which was completely past showed that he must have thought very long and deeply about it."[2] He returned on Sunday night to Eltham, in the company of Captain O'Shea, gloomy and miserable. There was a picture of the 1880 House of Commons hanging on the wall of the dining-room in which they sat with Mrs. O'Shea, and suddenly the wire which held it up snapped, and the picture crashed on to the floor. "There goes Home Rule, Parnell!" said O'Shea, with a nervous laugh; but Parnell did not reply. He took hold of the loose end of the wire to see if it were rotten, but it was quite sound. Later, Mrs. O'Shea spoke to him about the incident. "You did not really mind about that picture, did you?" He replied: "It was an omen, I think, darling; but for whom? Willie or me?"

[1] *Charles Stewart Parnell*, by Katharine O'Shea, vol. i., p. 263.

[2] *Charles Stewart Parnell*, by his brother, John Howard Parnell, p. 202.

We do not know what apprehensive thoughts filled his mind at this time, but there is reason to suppose that he sometimes feared that he might be assassinated by Irish extremists. Mrs. O'Shea, telling us how appalled he was by the intensity of the passion of hate that he had loosed in Ireland, says that on one occasion he replied to her pleadings for methods of conciliation: "Yes, I hold them now with my back to the wall, but if I turn to the Government I turn my back to them —and then——?"[1] He knew better, perhaps, than most people what were the ramifications of terrorism in Ireland, and how swiftly the Celt will turn and rend what formerly he cherished. He had seen the inner parts of the Fenian society in America, and knew what desperate men it contained. The madness of his sister Anna had stirred up a hell-broth of hate at home, nor was he himself innocent of having helped to stir the pot. Now, indeed, were Delia Tudor Stewart Parnell's chickens coming home to roost. Her exhibitions of hatred against England may, as some have suggested, have been the silly pleasantries of an unusually silly woman, but she had made her exhibitions before children who did not know them to be pleasantries, whose dark inheritance turned pleasantries to solemnities. Anna Parnell was mad. She suffered from epilepsy, and was probably seized by one of her recurrent fits when she entered the sea off the coast of Ilfracombe in 1911 and was drowned, although it was naturally suspected, remembering her ancestry and her peculiarities of conduct, that she had committed suicide. This mind, submitted to the influence of a hate-ridden mother, could not but be impaired. Parnell himself came perilously near to insanity. I do not doubt that in the last terrible months of his life he was a demented man. But he struggled for the mastery of his mind, and in happier circumstances might have kept it. His lapses into the advocacy of

[1] *Charles Stewart Parnell*, by Katharine O'Shea, vol. i., p. 257.

violence, as when, while he was in Kilmainham, he hoped that the Irish people would do their duty and thus prevent his speedy enlargement, may have been provoked from him, as some have said, by the wound to his vanity when a man of his eminence was flung into prison, but it is more likely that these counsels of despair only came from him when the dark inheritance had temporarily overpowered him. What tragedy can be deeper than that of the man who knows that he has madness in his blood, can feel it sometimes surging through his veins to his head, and, struggling to subdue it, is now and then defeated ?

There were extremists in Irish politics who distrusted and disliked Parnell, and he was aware of their distrust and dislike. He must sometimes have wondered how long it would be before one of these would put a knife in his back or a bullet in his brain. Many stories have been told of the way he prowled about London, coat-collar upturned, glancing furtively about him. There may have been a variety of reasons for this behaviour: the oddity he had inherited, his suspicion of his colleagues, his desire to conceal his intrigue with Mrs. O'Shea; but it is not unlikely that one of these reasons was a fear that a Fenian might murder him.

Dr. James Mullen, who entertained him in Cardiff in 1888, states that his guest was intensely suspicious of danger. " In my presence he pulled a revolver out of his breast pocket and placed it on his bedroom table. This seemed to me to be a very queer proceeding, but he excused it by saying that he need not carry the thing, as he was now amongst friends."[1]

Whatever his feelings on these matters may have been, there can be no doubt of this, that the assassination of Lord Frederick Cavendish and Mr. Burke on that Saturday evening in May, 1882, profoundly shook him, and he was not easily

[1] *The Story of a Toiler's Life*, by James Mullen, pp. 187-192.

dissuaded from his intention to resign from his leadership of the Irish party. Indeed, he authorised Captain O'Shea to write to Mr. Gladstone and say " that if Mr. Gladstone thought Parnell should abandon politics, Parnell would be guided by him and do so." Mr. Gladstone told him that it was his duty to continue in his leadership, " that his retirement from public life would do no good; on the contrary, would do harm." And so, more terribly troubled than he had ever been before, he continued to bear his burden.

The murder deeply shocked England and Ireland, but the mood of the people of both countries was one that might have been turned to kindly account by wise statesmanship. There is a depth of grief in which the exhibition of a single act of generosity can perform miracles. If Mr. Gladstone's Government at that supreme moment of agony and shame had let themselves be moved by the spirit of Lady Frederick Cavendish, the history now being recorded might have had a happier end. That noble lady, with her sorrow still heavy upon her, wrote to Lord Spencer and said she could " give up even " her husband " if his death were to work good to his fellow-men, which, indeed, was the whole object of his life." When a priest in Connemara read those words from the altar, his whole congregation spontaneously fell down upon their knees.[1] Mr. Burke's sister, who was a nun, carried the comforts of her religion to the cell of Brady, who had cut her brother's throat, and brought some humanity into that inhuman heart. The mood in England was no less exalted than that. " If a nation," said a leading journal in Paris, quoted by Mr. Morley, " should be judged by the way in which it acts on grave occasions, the spectacle offered by England is calculated to produce a high opinion of the political character and spirit of the British people." But, unfortunately, the Government were not then on the high

[1] *Life of Gladstone*, by John Morley, bk. viii., chap. iv., sect. 8.

level of the people, and their first act after the murders was to pass another Coercion Act, the fiftieth that had been passed in eighty-eight years. The Irish members resisted the measure, and eighteen of them were suspended after an all-night sitting; but their hearts were not seriously in the resistance. Neither they nor Parnell felt that they had a moral right to oppose Coercion on this occasion as they had had on other occasions.

V

During the following August Parnell destroyed the Ladies' Land League, which was infested with fanatics like his sister Anna. Davitt, who had a kindly feeling for this League, went to Parnell to ask for £500 out of the party funds to settle some of the League's debts. "No," said Parnell, "not a shilling; they have squandered the money given to them, and I shall take care that they get no more." The next day, however, he consented to give the money, but declared that he would not give any more. "Let the League be dissolved at once." Anna never forgave him, and declined to speak to him or have any communication with him. "On two occasions," says Mrs. O'Shea, "he met her accidentally and tried to speak to her, but she resolutely turned from him, and refused any reply to the letters he wrote her." She relapsed into silence in Bray, where she brooded on her wrongs and toiled over a bulky and ill-written statement of her grievances against her brother, which she carried from publisher to publisher, without finding one to print it. Nor was she heard of again until 1908, when she spoke for a Sinn Feiner, Mr. C. J. Dolan, in North Leitrim. The crowd pelted her with rotten eggs. The great name of Parnell meant nothing to them. Another time she lectured to the Daughters of Ireland—*Inghinidhe na hEireann*—but was not publicly heard of again until her death in 1911.

CHAPTER VIII

THE FIRST HOME RULE BILL

I

PARNELL now resolved to leave the land question alone, and to confine himself to the question of Home Rule. He kept to the terms of the Kilmainham pact, although the new Crimes Act was a violation of it and had greatly exasperated popular feeling. Davitt wished him to include Land Nationalism in the programme of the party, but Parnell, who disbelieved in Land Nationalisation, declined. His discipline of his party was now very severe, and he treated his subordinates—for they could hardly be called his colleagues—in an autocratic manner. Mr. Barry O'Brien records his method with them. "A Whig Home Ruler came along, and was about to pass into the reading-room, when Parnell suddenly stopped him. 'Where are you going?' he asked. 'Just into the reading-room, Mr. Parnell, to skim over the evening papers.' 'Don't you think you ought to be in the House?' 'Yes, Mr. Parnell; I will return immediately.' After a time another Irish member (a moderate Nationalist) came along. Parnell stopped him too. 'Why have you come away?' he asked. 'I have just spoken, Mr. Parnell,' said the member, 'to the motion for adjournment, and I cannot do anything until the division is taken. I cannot speak twice to the same motion.' 'No, but you can help to keep a House and watch what is going forward. I think you should all remain in your places.'" The inexorable Anglo-Irishman reduced the Celtic Irish to a state of servility, and it was then, and only then, that they were effective in the House of Commons. None of them, not Davitt nor Dillon nor the cleverest of them all, Tim Healy, could stand up to him. He was their master.

His health was now definitely poor. He had endured much in the dreadful year of 1882, and now suddenly came the news that his sister Fanny had died in New York. He was lying asleep at Eltham, after an all-night sitting, and Mrs. O'Shea saw the announcement of Fanny's death in a newspaper. She immediately woke him and told him what had happened. "He was terribly shocked, and I could not leave him at all that day. For a time he utterly broke down, but presently a cable arrived for him . . . saying that his sister's body was to be embalmed and brought to Ireland, and his horror and indignation were extreme. He immediately wrote out a message for me to cable from London on his behalf absolutely forbidding the embalmment of his sister's body, and saying that she was to be buried in America."[1] He suffered from a recurrence of the nervous attacks which had afflicted his childhood and youth. "He would spring up panic-stricken out of deep sleep, and, without fully awaking, try to beat off the imaginary foe that had pressed upon him. . . . When the attacks came on, I went into his room and held him down until he became fully conscious, for I feared that he would hurt himself. They were followed by a profuse perspiration and deep sleep of several hours." He was worried, too, by financial troubles. All politics are costly, but Irish politics in Parnell's time were a luxury. Isaac Butt ruined himself through his patriotism, and died in debt. He spent eighteen months in Kilmainham Jail for non-payment of his bills. Parnell must have expended large sums of money in helping some of his less affluent colleagues to pay their expenses. There were spongers and hangers-on waiting for some sort of reward for their services! . . . His sister, Mrs. Dickinson, and his mother, when she was at Avondale, freely spent his money. He had to telegraph to Mrs. Parnell once forbidding her to convert a newly-erected

[1] *Charles Stewart Parnell*, by Katharine O'Shea, vol. i., p. 44.

cattle-shed into a ball-room. Nominally, Parnell had an income of £4,000 per annum, but in fact he had considerably less, for his tenants were willing to do anything for him except pay their rent. When he was in Kilmainham someone asked him how the no-rent campaign was progressing. He replied: "All I know about it is that my own tenants are acting strictly up to it." Some of them had not paid a penny for their farms for seven years, and these were probably among the most resonant of the complainants against the tyrannies of the landlords! It will easily be realised, then, that Parnell, carrying on an expensive political career—we have already noted that his first election cost him £2,000, or half his year's income—and maintaining an extravagant household out of a dwindling income, soon found himself in straits. There seems not to have been any harassment that a man can suffer absent from his life at this time, and when we consider his state of mind and health and finance, we need not feel astonished at the fact that inertia sometimes prevented him from expending his best energies for his party.

After the Phœnix Park murders and the passing of the fiftieth Coercion Act, a new political organisation had to be formed. The Land League had been suppressed by the Government, and the Ladies' Land League had been suppressed by Parnell himself. There must, therefore, be a new organisation, and so the National League was formed on October 17, 1882. Mr. Healy, quoted by Mr. Barry O'Brien, tells us how he went to Morrison's Hotel in Dublin, on the Sunday before the day on which the National League was founded, to see Parnell and draft the manifesto of the new organisation. He found his chief in bed and ill. Parnell was full of superstition. "October," in his horoscope, "was a month of 'influence,' and he always regarded it with apprehension," and certainly the number of remarkable events, including his death, which happened to him in October is

extraordinary. Mr. Healy sat by his bedside drafting the constitution of the National League. Four candles stood on the table. One of them spluttered and expired. "A stir from the patient aroused me, and I looked up. With astonishment I saw that Mr. Parnell had turned round, raised himself in bed, and, leaning over my table, was furiously blowing out the remaining candles. 'What on earth is that for?' said I, amazed at this performance. His eyes gleamed weirdly in the pale setting as he answered: 'Don't you know that nothing is more unlucky than to have three candles burning?' Almost petrified, I confessed that I did not. 'Your constitution, then, would have been very successful,' said he with quiet sarcasm, and he turned his face to the wall again, evidently persuaded that his intervention alone had averted some political catastrophe." The principal items in the programme of the National League were Home Rule and peasant proprietorship. Davitt had been desirous of substituting Land Nationalisation for peasant proprietorship, and Dillon had wished to carry on a more vigorous campaign against the Government; but Parnell overruled them both. Davitt submitted, and Dillon temporarily retired from politics to Colorado. Despite his ill-health and his embarrassments, he still was chief.

There was continual friction between him and the extremists, but he contrived with great dexterity to keep them from breaking with him. He was not in a position to disregard them. The bulk of the money which came from America came from sources controlled by the extremists, and it was therefore essential to the efficient working of his Parliamentary machinery that he should not lose their support. This, however, was not the sole reason for his reluctance to throw them aside. It was a cardinal point in his political belief that Irishmen should be united. He had made a unity, and because of that unity had achieved, and was still

to achieve, much that was of immense worth to Ireland. He would not lightly, therefore, let it be destroyed. Parnell had considerable contempt for the Bishops and priests of the Catholic Church. Some of it was probably due to his aristocratic and Protestant origin, but more of it was due to the fact that many of the Bishops and priests were contemptible persons. They, for their part, heartily disliked the idea of being led by a Protestant and a gentleman, and were biding the time when they might bring him down. For most of his political life he had to fight the hierarchy of the Catholic Church in Ireland. The Vatican itself was not well disposed towards him, and was always ready to help the British Government against him. Dr. Mullen, in *The Story of a Toiler's Life*, says: " It appeared to me that between him and the clericals there was no love lost; they regarded him with jealousy and suspicion, and he regarded them with contempt, sometimes, but not always, thinly concealed under a mask of respect. They confronted each other like two antagonists with their hands on the hilts of the swords which they hesitated to draw, each waiting till the other would give him an opening. A high-placed ecclesiastic said to a friend of mine, ' Parnell is now a great man, but if he makes a false step we'll crush him with a heavy foot.' " Mr. Morley, in his *Life of Gladstone*, states (bk. ix., chap. v., sect. 3) that Parnell, when discussing the terms of the Home Rule Bill with him, " made one significant suggestion: he wished the Bill to impose the same disqualification upon the clergy as exists in our own Parliament. But he would have liked to see certain ecclesiastical dignitaries included by virtue of their office in the upper or protective branch." Nevertheless, despite his ill-concealed antipathy to the priests, which was once publicly revealed in Ulster at a meeting from which he thought the reporters had departed, he would never consent to any policy which excluded the Church from a share in the

national movement, nor would he permit the priests to be alienated by the party. There were occasions when he ought to have fought the hierarchy, and could have done so with success, but to have fought them would have been to break up the unity he had made; and so he declined the fight. What is true of his attitude to the Church is true also of his attitude to the Fenians. When he was asked to move a resolution condemning outrages, a resolution which must have been near to his mind, he refused. "No," he said; "I dislike outrages as much as any man, but I am not going to act police for the English Government." He remembered, no doubt, that Isaac Butt fell on the day when he won the applause of the House of Commons for rebuking him and Biggar.

The year 1883 opened in gloom. The executive were administering the Crimes Act with great severity, and a number of M.P.'s, including Mr. Biggar, were arrested, although their prosecution was not very successful. In January the Phœnix Park murderers were seized by the police, and their trial began in February. The revelations made were startling, and there were excited hopes raised among their enemies that Parnell and his colleagues might be implicated in the crime. One of the arrested men, James Carey,[1] turned informer. This was the man who had signalled to the assassins that Lord Frederick and Mr. Burke were approaching them. Sir William Harcourt, who was never well disposed towards the Irish, thought that "this" would take the starch out of the boys. Mr. Forster, still sore from his wounds of office, determined to avenge himself on Parnell, and he went to the House of Commons on February 22, 1883, and made a speech, very ably and passionately delivered, in which he sought to prove that Parnell,

[1] Lady Randolph Churchill, in her *Reminiscences*, states that Carey occupied the cell in Kilmainham in which Parnell had been confined.

the avowed enemy of England, was the head of "a lawless and rebellious agitation aimed at the very heart of the Empire." "My charge," he said, "is against the honourable member for Cork. . . . It is not that he himself directly planned or perpetrated outrages or murders, but that he either connived at them or, when warned, did not use his influence to prevent them."

Enough is known now to compel the most bitter opponent of Parnellism to acknowledge that this charge was unfounded, that, in fact, Parnell had steadily opposed the commission of crime and outrage to the extent even of endangering his own movement; but at that time it was perfectly easy to make out a case against him. Had he himself not authorised a statement from Kilmainham that if he were speedily released from jail he would consider that the Irish people had not done their duty? But a case can be made out against any public man by an adroit and not too scrupulous choice of passages from his speeches, and Mr. Forster, naturally enough, made his case without much particularity of principle. Parnell heard him without displaying a sign of feeling, except once, when, as Mr. Forster reached the words "or when warned" in the passage quoted above, he fiercely interrupted him with, "It is a lie." When the ex-Chief Secretary sat down, the House expected Parnell to reply, but he did not do so. He remained in his seat, nor would he stir, though the Commons rang with the cry, "Parnell! Parnell!" It was not until the next afternoon, in the presence of the Prince of Wales and Cardinal Manning, that he replied to his accuser, and then only at the urgent instance of his party.

It was a singular reply, one which seemed at the moment to be an appalling mistake, but proved later to be, from Parnell's point of view, a complete success. He did not acknowledge the right of the English to interrogate him at all.

His responsibility was not to the English, but to the Irish, and by the Irish alone would he be judged. He was speaking, not to exculpate himself in the eyes of the English, who, he thought, were too prejudiced to judge him fairly, but to make his position clear to the Irish people at home and abroad. He rounded on Mr. Forster, and heavily raked that unhappy gentleman with fierce volleys of derision. When he sat down the House was astounded. He had not denied anything except its right to try him! . . . Once again Mr. Forster had tried a fall with Parnell, and once again he had himself been thrown. The attempt to implicate Parnell in the Phœnix Park murders and crime generally was temporarily abandoned, although a person called Houston was ferreting about Dublin for "evidence" against him, and getting acquainted with the semi-bankrupt Pigott, who was ready for a trifle to manufacture evidence against anybody. Five of the murderers were hanged, and nine of them were sent to penal servitude. Carey, set free for informing, sailed for South Africa, and was shot on board the boat by a man called O'Donnell, who was brought back to England and hanged for his murder. Of such are the high-minded patriots. By the labours of such as these the peace of mankind continually is threatened and disturbed.

II

The years 1883 and 1884 passed without serious incident. Parnell made a raid on Ulster during the summer of 1883. A by-election was announced at Monaghan, and Mr. T. M. Healy, the adoring and brilliant lieutenant of a chief who could not return his affection, was sent up to win it, which he did by a majority of 365. Here Parnell, according to Mr. Healy, gave a display of his superstition by refusing to sleep in a room numbered thirteen. He felt convinced that the

landlord of the hotel was a Tory and had deliberately placed him in this ill-numbered room in order to injure him. When Mr. Healy offered to change rooms with him, he said, "You'll lose the election if you sleep in that room!" and went to bed full of forebodings.

After this election, Parnell himself largely withdrew from the campaign and allowed his colleagues to conduct it. Mrs. O'Shea was now the recognised go-between him and Mr. Gladstone, and she furnished the latter with information of the sort of measures that would be acceptable to the former. She seems to have done her work efficiently and tactfully, and to have been of immense help to Parnell, whose financial troubles about this time became acute. In 1882, when his mother, then in America, appealed to him for help, he was unable to give her any. This started the legend that he was mean to her. A mortgage for £13,000 on Avondale was foreclosed, and Parnell filed a petition for the sale of his home. When the news got into the papers, Dr. Croke, the Archbishop of Cashel, a good friend to Parnell, proposed in a public letter that the Irish people should raise a fund to pay off the mortgage. When £7,688 had been raised, the Vatican made one of its inept interferences in Irish politics. On May 11, 1883, a letter, signed by Cardinal Simeoni and Monseigneur Dominico Jacobini, Prefect and Secretary respectively of the Sacred Congregation de Propaganda Fide, was sent to the Irish hierarchy, condemning the tribute and ordering them not to countenance it. The effect of this Papal letter on the people—for the priests and Bishops, of course, as was their duty, obeyed it—was that by June 19, five weeks later, the amount of the tribute was doubled, and on December 11, 1883, it amounted to more than £37,000. "It is absurd," said Mr. Gladstone, "to suppose that the Pope exercises any influence in Irish politics." The manner in which Mr. Parnell received this sum from the Lord Mayor

of Dublin at a meeting held in the Rotunda on December 11, 1883, has often been described. He put the cheque in his pocket without saying a word of thanks! But who can tell what Parnell felt on that night? There were many times in his life when emotion made him silent. This probably was one of them.

But although Parnell was "slowing down," he was not neglecting his work. Through Mrs. O'Shea he was sending material to Mr. Gladstone which guided the latter towards his Home Rule Bill. It was not easy for him to keep to his plans for quietness in Irish affairs during the years 1883 and 1884, for dynamitards made various attempts to blow up public buildings in England. On January 24, 1885, these attempts culminated in one to destroy the Tower, the House of Commons, and Westminster Hall. A dynamite factory was discovered in Birmingham. The *Irish World*, the American organ of the extremists, publicly opposed Parnell, complaining bitterly of his "slowing-down" process. There was discontent among his colleagues. Davitt, whose mind was veering more and more towards Socialism, now began to preach his doctrine of Land Nationalisation, which Parnell, in a speech at Drogheda on April 14, 1884, denounced. Davitt immediately stayed his propaganda, and went to Egypt to rest. Parnell's colleagues began to comment upon his inactivity; they could not believe that a man was doing anything unless he was kicking up a row. Ribald remarks were made behind his back about "Kitty O'Shea" by men who would not have dared to make them to his face.

But Parnell knew what he was about. He was aware of a changing temper about Ireland in the Liberal party. He knew that some members of the Cabinet were opposed to the reimposition of Coercion, and that Mr. Gladstone himself was brooding over schemes for Irish self-government. Mr. Joseph Chamberlain had actually submitted a plan to the

Cabinet for establishing an elective National Council in Dublin, with control over administrative boards and departments, but not over police and the administration of the law. Mr. Gladstone was prepared to give the Council charge of the police. It is permissible here, although it would be more in place later, to pause for a moment to speculate on the singularity of Mr. Chamberlain's position with regard to Ireland. He was, very naturally, full of plans for the extension of local government. He had been the principal agent in creating a vigorous and highly efficient municipality in Birmingham, where reforms of a sweeping character had been made. There are few cities in the British Islands where there is so much civic pride as there is in Birmingham, and fewer still where the civic pride is based, not on empty boasting, but on actual accomplishment. Mr. Chamberlain had many enemies, and was, for a period of his life, the bane of earnest and honest people; but there can be few persons left now who will deny that he was a man of great gifts or that he used his gifts throughout his life for the good of his country. It is one of the calamities of the time we are now discussing that Mr. Chamberlain, for whom Parnell at one time felt great respect, was unable to free his mind from its passion for local government. If he had supported Mr. Gladstone when the split came in the Liberal party over the Home Rule, it would not have mattered very much that that very tedious gentleman, the Marquis of Hartington, seceded. But Mr. Chamberlain could not then raise his mind to the wider levels on which, in later years, he was to rest it. He was prepared to give the Irish almost all that they desired if only they would call it Local Government instead of Home Rule. He was willing to let them administer their own affairs, if only they would consent to do so, not from a Parliament, but from a National Council. They, for their part, were willing to give up this or that demand if only they

were allowed to call themselves a nation and not a glorified municipality. One easily falls into the belief that a great deal of invective and passion was expended on mere matters of terminology, and that because Mr. Chamberlain *would* say "Local Government" when the Irish insisted on saying "Parliament," much harm and misery ensued to England and Ireland, and, perhaps, to the world. He was the one Englishman of eminence who could have influenced Parnell. It is part of the tragedy we are now observing that he failed to do so.

III

But it is possible that Parnell's abstention from activity in Ireland was due to a cause about which we have singularly little information. Sir Edward Clarke, who led for Captain O'Shea in the divorce proceedings, states in his autobiography[1] that Mrs. O'Shea bore two daughters—one called Clare, born in March, 1883, and the other called Frances, in November, 1884—to Parnell, in addition to the child, Claude Sophie, which was born and died in 1882. It is a strange fact that Mrs. O'Shea, who almost boasts of the birth of her first baby by Parnell, makes no mention whatever of the birth of these two children in her book. Sir Edward Clarke is very positive about them. He states that "some time before the trial Parnell entertained the idea of leaving England with Mrs. O'Shea, and taking the two girls, born in 1883 and 1884, who were unquestionably his daughters, and he consulted Mr. Inderwick whether there was any European country in which Mrs. O'Shea, in spite of the orders of an English court of law, would be able to retain the custody of these children."[2] We know from his letters to her how agitated Parnell was when Mrs. O'Shea's first confinement, so far as he was con-

[1] *The Story of my Life*, by the Rt. Hon. Sir Edward Clarke, K.C., p. 286.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 290.

cerned, was approaching, and we may well believe that his anxiety about the others prevented him from carrying on propaganda work in Ireland, especially when he had able lieutenants to do the work for him, and, perhaps more importantly, his very aloofness was one of his assets.

IV

The passage of the Reform Act of 1884, establishing household suffrage in Ireland, added greatly to Parnell's power and considerably increased the change begun by the Land Act of 1881. The government of Ireland was passing rapidly from the hands of the landlords to the hands of the people. The Reform Act increased the Irish electorate from 200,000 to 700,000 voters. When the grand juries were abolished some years afterwards, and county government was controlled by elected County Councils, the change might also have been said to be completed. A General Election was approaching, and Parnell, heartened by the increase in the electorate, prepared himself for it. He made a short tour in the South of Ireland, delivering speeches in various places, including his own constituency, the city of Cork, where he uttered one of his most famous passages: " No man has a right to fix the boundary of the march of a nation. No man has a right to say, ' Thus far shalt thou go, and no farther '; and we have never attempted to fix the *ne plus ultra* to the progress of Ireland's nationhood, and we never shall." The sentiment has been used by every crack-brained revolutionary who has flourished in Ireland since Parnell's death, but it may be enough to say that if Parnell had lived to be the first Prime Minister of Ireland, he would have clapped nearly all who make oratorical capital out of his famous passage into Kilmainham. It is one of those passages which appear to mean a great deal, but mean, in fact, very little; but hundreds of professional Irishmen have used it for the

befuddlement of the minds of thousands of their countrymen. Parnell was a man of Conservative character, and, like most Conservatives, he had the courage of the Liberals' convictions. He would not endure an injustice, but neither would he tolerate a nuisance. He was not entirely jocular when he told Michael Davitt that his first act when he became Prime Minister of Ireland would be to lock him up. Mr. Labouchere, in a letter to Mr. Chamberlain, dated Sunday, December (? 20), 1885,[1] said: "My own conviction is that if the Irish get Home Rule, they will, with the exception of the land question, surprise us by their conservatism. Their first thing will be to pass some sort of very drastic legislation against the Fenians." Parnell in this respect was remarkably representative of his people. He would have given uncommonly short shrift to Mexican gentlemen with a passion for metaphysical hair-splitting.

The Liberal Government was now tottering to its fall, and in 1885 it collapsed. An amendment of no importance to the Budget Bill was moved by Sir Michael Hicks-Beach on June 8, and when the House divided, the Irishmen voted with the Tories, and the Government were defeated by twelve votes. Mr. Gladstone immediately resigned, and Lord Salisbury became Prime Minister. The new Lord-Lieutenant, Lord Carnarvon, was manifestly friendly to the Irish people, and anxious to rule by means of the ordinary law of the land. The Crimes Act, which Mr. Gladstone had threatened to renew because of the epidemic of sedition, was allowed to lapse by the Conservatives. It seemed, indeed, as if the new Government, which depended for its life on Parnell, were about to do all that the Irish wanted. Parnell asked for an enquiry into the Maamtrasna murders, and got it. He asked for a new Land Act, and he got it. Lord Carnarvon invited him to come and discuss Irish affairs

[1] *Life of Henry Labouchere*, by A. L. Thorold, p. 253.

with him, and the two men met in a house in Grosvenor Square and talked for more than an hour. The conversation resulted in some controversy afterwards, but we need not deal with it here at any length, since it is comparatively unimportant. It will be enough if we say that it revealed very plainly the sympathy which Lord Carnarvon had with the aspirations of the Irish for self-government, and that there was nothing in it which was not highly creditable to him.

On August 11, 1885, Parliament was prorogued, and nine days later Parnell announced that the Irish party would fight the election on the one issue of legislative independence. When the election was over, there were eighty-six Nationalists in the House, of whom twenty-two had been in prison under the Coercion Act of 1881. When the figures for the whole House were published, it was seen that the Liberals had a majority of eighty-six over the Tories. There were 335 Liberals and 249 Tories. It was seen also that Parnell and his eighty-five supporters could throw Lord Salisbury's Government out and put Mr. Gladstone again in power. The beneficent interest in Ireland manifested by the Conservatives was of brief duration. If the Irish party had been a little larger, we may not doubt that the Tories in 1886 would have given some measure of self-government to Ireland; but it did not matter to Parnell which party was in power, for he was now master of them both. He was confident in 1885 "that, whether Liberals or Tories get in, Home Rule will be granted," according to Mr. Healy, who wrote in those terms in a letter dated October 15, 1885, to Mr. Labouchere.[1] On February 1, through Irish help, Mr. Gladstone again became Prime Minister. His age was seventy-six; Parnell was forty. Gladstone had been in Parliament for fifty-four years; Parnell had been there for ten. Mr. Gladstone immediately sat down to the devisal of his first Home Rule Bill.

[1] *Life of Henry Labouchere*, by A. L. Thorold, p. 235.

V

But the Sardonic Dramatist had not forgotten what the end of the play was to be, and in the midst of all this splendour he thrust a little scene in which preparation was made for the climax. Mr. T. P. O'Connor had been elected for two constituencies at the General Election: Galway and the Scotland Division of Liverpool. He chose, very naturally, to sit for the latter, and it became necessary, therefore, to select a new candidate for Galway. Captain O'Shea, who was politically ambitious—he once asked to be made Chief Secretary for Ireland—considered that he had claims upon Parnell's gratitude. Some said that these claims were founded upon his complacency about his wife's infidelity, but they were, in fact, founded upon the good ground that O'Shea had rendered great service to Parnell in various political matters, but chiefly in the arrangement of the Kilmainham treaty.

O'Shea in some respects was more of a mystery man than Parnell, but we need not make mean additions to the mystery. Probably we shall never know the truth about him, unless his son has records to publish, and he will long be a maligned man. Allusion has already been made to the legend that he deliberately used his wife as a lure to draw Parnell to his destruction. This belief was widely held at the time of the divorce, and for many years afterwards, but it cannot be based on anything but prejudice against a man whose life, indeed, made him peculiarly subject to the bias of his countrymen. He did not cut a very distinguished figure. He lived in a precarious manner. He had foppish manners and an affected accent which, by themselves, were sufficient to rouse the dislike of other Irishmen. He did not conceal his contempt for the Nationalists. He mocked their manners and their brogues, and aped their way of addressing the House. "Mishter Spaker-r-r, sorr-r-r!" he would jeer at them, and

the poor, uncouth clowns, writhing under his contempt, would let their dislike of him grow into hatred. Parnell had as much contempt for his followers as O'Shea had, but he expressed it in a different fashion. Parnell had the proud demeanour of an aristocrat: O'Shea had only the silly superciliousness of a member of the middle class; and what the Irish members were willing to endure from a gentleman they were not prepared to endure from Captain O'Shea.

It was natural, therefore, that when the calamity fell upon the party, they sought to relieve their feelings by venting some of their rage on the man who had persistently mocked and jeered at them. We will do well to remember that the legends about O'Shea's connivance in his wife's adultery with Parnell were based chiefly on the fact that those who spread them intensely disliked him. The legend-makers had, no doubt, difficulty in believing that what was known to them was not also known to him, and that it was impossible for Mrs. O'Shea to bear three children in less than three years to Parnell without her husband suspecting that he was not the father of them. But we know enough about mankind to know that any husband, while ready enough to doubt the fidelity of another man's wife, is rarely modest enough to admit that *his* wife could be unfaithful to him. The secrecy which Parnell attempted to maintain about his relations with Mrs. O'Shea seems to have been successful only with her husband. His suspicions were several times aroused, but on each occasion they were dispelled by the positive protestations of Mrs. O'Shea and of Parnell himself. We shall be doing no injustice to our intelligence, therefore, if we believe that Captain O'Shea, though he sometimes had trouble in dispelling his suspicions, remained unaware that his wife was his chief's mistress until the time when he instituted proceedings for divorce. His claims on Parnell's gratitude for political services were acknowledged by Mr. Chamberlain,

who agreed that Parnell was in his debt; and Parnell himself seems to have felt that there was justice in O'Shea's claim.

But, while we acknowledge that Captain O'Shea honestly demanded a reward from Parnell, we cannot acknowledge that he displayed much intelligence in making the demand or in using the reward when he got it. We have noted that he made himself very disagreeable to the Nationalists. We have now to note a more serious fact—namely, that he resolutely declined to take the party pledge. Why this man, who was not without ability, should have imagined that he would be acceptable to a party from which he ostentatiously separated himself in the House of Commons, whose members he openly derided, whose pledge he declined to take, is a mystery. When he was elected, he did not sit with the party, nor did he vote for the Home Rule Bill. He walked out of the House during the division, and soon afterwards resigned his seat. But it may be that he counted on Parnell's mastery of the Irish members to make them accept him. The event proved that Parnell had the power to do it, but O'Shea, when in later times he surveyed the facts of his political life, could hardly have been astonished that this very circumstance was confirmation to the Irishmen of his connivance in his wife's adultery. Why, they not unreasonably said to themselves, should Parnell run the risk of endangering his leadership for a man whom he notoriously disliked if he were not bribing him to hold his tongue? Parnell was, in fact, forcing O'Shea upon his party at the instigation of Mrs. O'Shea, who wanted to provide her hubsand with some distraction which would keep him away from Eltham. She says this plainly enough in her book.[1] But Captain O'Shea seems to have been innocent of any other motive in this matter than the legitimate desire to fulfil his ambition to be a politician. Had he been a less obstinate and more intel-

[1] *Charles Stewart Parnell*, by Katharine O'Shea, vol. ii., p. 85.

ligent man, he would have laid his claims to gratitude not before Parnell, but before Mr. Chamberlain, whose faithful servant he was.

Whatever the motives were, the fact remains: O'Shea was proposed by Parnell as the Nationalist candidate in succession to Mr. T. P. O'Connor. Mr. O'Connor was the first person to be told of the chief's intention, and the news dumbfounded him. It dumbfounded the party. Mr. O'Connor immediately consulted Mr. Biggar, who, when he was told of the choice, exploded into incoherence. They telegraphed to Mr. Healy, who was in Ireland, and then caught the train at Euston, and started for Dublin. On their arrival, they found that the news of O'Shea's candidature was in the papers ! They must now fight Parnell or capitulate. Biggar, who had great affection for his leader, an affection which was returned, determined to fight. Mr. O'Connor wavered, and so did the majority of the Irish members then in Dublin. But Mr. Healy supported Biggar, and both of them started off to Galway to rouse the electorate against the candidate. Mr. Healy plays a queer part in the drama, and from now to the end of it he will grow in importance. His behaviour is understandable, though not creditable. If there is any such thing as an "inferiority complex," then undoubtedly Mr. Healy had it. He found himself spurned by the man he was prepared to admire to the point of deep affection, and his affection turned to malignant hatred. It is a singular feature of that hatred that it was vented as much on Mrs. O'Shea as on Parnell himself.

Biggar and Healy soon had Galway in an uproar. Biggar's blunt speech and Healy's bitter tongue between them roused the easily-excited passions of the west to a state of high fury. Biggar told the electors at a public meeting that Parnell had chosen O'Shea to be their representative because Mrs. O'Shea was his mistress. He sent a telegram to Parnell himself,

declaring that " Mrs. O'Shea will be your ruin," but the wording was altered by Mr. Healy to " The O'Sheas will be your ruin." No one who knows Ireland, and how little of reticence the postal officials display about the messages they dispatch, can fail to realise that Biggar's message was soon part of the gossip of Galway. The hullabaloo raised by Biggar began to frighten his colleagues in Dublin. Mr. Healy, if we are to judge him by the altered telegram, also began to be afraid. His impulsive and emotional mind—a Southern Irish mind—sent him rocketing up in a fury, but his fear of Parnell—and there is no doubt whatever that Mr. Healy physically and mentally feared Parnell—soon sent him dropping down again like a stick when the force of the rocket is spent. Messages were sent to Parnell urging him to go to Galway and quell the furies, but Parnell did not answer the messages. He had a habit of not answering messages. On February 9, however, he went to Dublin, where he sent for Mr. T. P. O'Connor. " I am going straight on to Galway," he said, " and I want you to come with me." And Mr. O'Connor, who had started off to oppose Captain O'Shea's candidature, found himself travelling to Galway to support it !

When the news reached Galway that Parnell was on his way to the town, dismay entered the heart of Mr. Healy, and he went to his Ulster Presbyterian colleague demanding what was to be done. Biggar was consuming a large breakfast when the shivering Papist arrived. " What will we do with Parnell ?" Mr. Healy asked. " Mob him, sir," the Protestant replied. When the train carrying Parnell and Mr. O'Connor reached Galway station, a huge and angry mob was waiting for it. A roar reached the roof as the engine slowed down, but when Parnell descended from his carriage no one assailed him. They might have come to welcome him, not to mob him ! Their demeanour was as mild as if

they had come to present him with an illuminated address—until they saw the figure of Mr. O'Connor emerging from the carriage; and then, determined that someone should suffer, but unable to raise a finger to Parnell, they rushed at their late member and severely mauled him. They might have killed him had not Parnell rescued him from them! . . . At the hotel Parnell, after he had tidied himself, met Biggar and Healy and others of his colleagues, and listened while they stated their case against Captain O'Shea. He replied: "Captain O'Shea was his candidate, and would not be withdrawn. A rumour has been spread," he added, "that if Captain O'Shea is withdrawn I will retire from the party. I have no intention of resigning my position. I would not resign it if the people of Galway were to kick me through the streets to-day!" In that moment Mr. Healy's stick dropped prostrate at Parnell's feet. The assembled members, with the exception of the Ulsterman, were reduced to obedience, and the crowd was told that Captain O'Shea would be the candidate, and that Parnell would presently address them. He went out to the people—a restless, resentful, passionate people—and put out his left hand. "I have a Parliament for Ireland within the hollow of my hand," he said in his short, sharp voice; and then, smashing his right hand on to his left, he added: "Destroy me, and you take away that Parliament. Reject Captain O'Shea, destroy me, and there will arise a shout from all the enemies of Ireland, 'Parnell is beaten; Ireland has no longer a leader!' . . ."

Only one man remained unmoved—the Ulster Presbyterian. He pushed his way to the front, and shouted out: "Sir, if Mr. Lynch [O'Shea's opponent] goes to the poll, I'll support him!" He was, perhaps, the only man in that crowd for whom Parnell had any respect, but his support did not carry Mr. Lynch to Parliament. Captain O'Shea was elected by an overwhelming majority. The uncrowned king could rule.

VI

On April 8, 1886, Mr. Gladstone, in a speech which lasted for three and a half hours, moved the first reading of the Bill for the Amendment of the Provision for the Future Government of Ireland, which was popularly known as the Home Rule Rill. He had endured much trouble and vexation before that evening. His colleagues were divided. Lord Hartington, Mr. Chamberlain, Mr. Trevelyan, Mr. Goschen, and Sir Henry James were all opposed to his views, so far as these were known to them. It was not easy to know what his views were, for he was a master of the invaluable Parliamentary gift of vagueness. "On January 21, 1886, Mr. Gladstone delivered an eloquent speech on the Address which left the Liberals totally unable to say whether he was advocating or opposing Home Rule for Ireland. They suspected him of advocating it because of the cheers which he received from the Irish members."[1] But by April 8 all doubts were resolved, and none of the gentlemen whose names have been set out were now colleagues of the Premier. Mr. Chamberlain was one of the last to go. He left on March 26, 1886, taking Mr. Jesse Collings, Mr. Trevelyan, and Mr. Heneage with him.

It is an odd circumstance that Parnell, whose judgment of men was seldom sound, though his judgment of a situation was rarely at fault, attached more importance to Lord Randolph Churchill than to Mr. Chamberlain. He never cultivated Mr. Chamberlain's friendship, as he ought to have done, as Mr. Chamberlain seems to have been willing that he should do, but he did attempt to make friends with Lord Randolph. Mr. Chamberlain had established an acquaintance with Mr. Healy, which may have accounted for the fact that he failed to keep or increase his friendship with Parnell; for Parnell

[1] *Life of Lord Goschen*, by the Hon. Arthur D. Eliott, vol. ii., pp. 9-10.

was undeniably a jealous man, and about this period of his life a distrustful man. It may be that Parnell warmed to Lord Randolph in a way that he could not do to Mr. Chamberlain because of some similarity in their natures. Sir Edward Clarke describes Lord Randolph's first public speech in terms that might almost be used to describe the first public speech made by Parnell. Sir Edward went to Woodstock during the General Election of 1874. "Then I met Lord Randolph Churchill, a nervous, rather awkward young man, who certainly seemed to have the most elementary ideas about current politics. We had some talk about the subjects he was going to deal with in his speech. I wrote out four or five questions which were to be put into friendly hands and asked from the back of the room, and gave Lord Randolph the answers. When we came to the meeting Lord Randolph was very nervous. He had written out his speech on small sheets of paper, and thought that if he put his hat on the table and the papers in the bottom of the hat he would be able to read them. This, of course, he could not do. There was a rather noisy audience, who gibed at him and shouted to him to take the things out of his hat, and so on, and the speech was far from being a success."[1]

But Parnell's faith in Lord Randolph Churchill, whatever its foundation may have been, was not justified by Lord Randolph's behaviour during Lord Salisbury's short-lived ministry in 1885. If there was one man in England whom Parnell should have cultivated at this time, that man was Mr. Chamberlain. We may thank Parnell's mother, who had trained her son to hate and distrust Englishmen, for the fact that Parnell failed to make friends in England or to recognise which Englishman out of a group of Englishmen was the most likely to be of help to him. He regarded them

[1] *The Story of my Life*, by the Rt. Hon. Sir Edward Clarke, K.C., p. 108.

all as hypocrites and schemers, and when he showed signs of liking one of them, he did so only because of some similarity of nature between them or because the Englishman was a rebel.

It may be appropriate at this point to quote an interesting comparison between the Marquis of Hartington and Mr. Parnell, made by the former's biographer. "Both Hartington and Parnell were of the positive, or realist, character; neither the one nor the other was influenced by abstract ideas, or by books, or by phrases of any kind. Neither man was in the least degree a Radical, a Sentimentalist, or an 'Intellectual.' Neither was swayed in his course by philosophic theory or by definite religion. Each was cool, aloof, by nature indolent, inclined to silence and averse to rhetoric, country-bred, independent, unimpassionate, self-contained, indifferent in the main to the opinions of men at large, doggedly tenacious of his own views and purpose. Both had that which Harcourt (or was it Lowe?) used to call 'Hartington's you-be-damnedness,' the characteristic so striking in that mighty Anglo-Irishman, the Duke of Wellington. This quality was brought to a lofty point by the Irish squire who led, and despised, the Nationalists. Hartington and Parnell were, in fact, both of them extremely Anglo-Saxon by nature and temperament, as they mainly were by descent. Hartington himself, through the Butlers and the Boyles, may have inherited some of the Anglo-Irish temperament, which is that acquired by men of a conquering race living among the conquered."[1]

But Parnell never paid any attention to Lord Hartington, though even he would have been better worthy of his regard than Lord Randolph Churchill. One is appalled on rising from a study of political affairs to discover how few men of eminence really base their behaviour on principles, how easily they are governed by personal feelings. If Mr. Gladstone and Mr. Chamberlain could have been friendlier to each other, how

[1] *Life of the Duke of Devonshire*, by Bernard Holland, vol. ii., p. 134.

different might the history of England have been. If Parnell and Mr. Healy could have lived on terms of kindliness, we might not now be mourning over a divided Ireland and a hate-ridden, bankrupt Irish Free State. "But 'tis in vain, for soldiers to complain," as Wolfe Tone continually lamented, and we must reconcile ourselves as best we may to the melancholy fact that leaders will wreck nations to gratify a private grudge.

Eight days after the introduction of his first Home Rule Bill Mr. Gladstone, on April 16, 1886, introduced a new Land Bill. This was a measure to buy out the landlords and establish a peasant proprietary. The Land Bill was designed to appease the landlords for the Home Rule Bill, but it failed to do so; and when the second reading of the latter Bill was moved, Lord Hartington, the dissenting Liberal, moved its rejection. The Opposition was hardening. Mr. Bright joined it. On June 7, 1886, the debate on Lord Hartington's motion for rejection was brought to an end. Parnell made a finely-phrased appeal for the Bill, but the appeal was not heeded, and it was defeated by 343 votes to 313. Parliament was immediately dissolved, and in July the General Election was held, the second in six months. When it was over, Mr. Gladstone was out of power and Lord Salisbury was again Prime Minister. And there was no Home Rule. "Parnell," says Mr. Barry O'Brien, "was standing one day in the lobby after the General Election; Mr. Chamberlain passed. 'There goes the man,' said Parnell, 'who killed the Home Rule Bill.'" But it is not wise to defer the recognition of your enemy until after the battle has taken place. Mr. Chamberlain might have been converted to an alliance, and the war, had this been done, would have ended in victory for Parnell. But Parnell's mind was too full of his mother's bitterness for him to observe the field with sufficient vision, and what was left of his mind was in the keeping of Mrs. O'Shea.

VII

Parnell was now seriously ill, and he went under a false name to consult Sir Henry Thompson about himself. Mrs. O'Shea went with him. "His nerves had completely broken down, and I felt terribly worried about him." Sir Henry told her that Mr. "Stewart" must be careful to keep his feet warm, as his circulation was bad, and thereafter she made him carry spare socks in a little black bag, so that he might change into dry ones whenever there was need to do so. The little black bag became part of the mystery which enveloped him. His colleagues were deeply concerned about him now. His family history was known, and some of them feared that he was about to lose his reason. Their fears were increased by the fact that sometimes they did not see him for several weeks together, nor had they any idea of where he was to be found. He and Mrs. O'Shea shifted from place to place, invariably under assumed names—from Brighton to Eastbourne (from which he suddenly departed because he discovered that his brother Henry was living there), from Eastbourne to Herne Bay, from Herne Bay to Eltham. He took a house at Brockley, calling himself "Clement Preston," although his identity was soon discovered. It was believed, however, that Mrs. O'Shea was his sister Anna. Leaving Brockley, he went to York Terrace, Regent's Park, where his sense of solitude deepened. From this time until he died Parnell had a horror of loneliness. It was as if he feared that he might lose his mind if he were left by himself. Mrs. O'Shea tells us in a poignant passage that, when she had settled him in the house at York Terrace and had returned to Eltham, she sat by the open window of her room until three in the morning brooding over her troubles. And while she sat there, a little drowsy from fatigue, she heard the clip-clap of a horse's hooves coming towards her and the jingling of

harness bells, and presently a cab appeared with Parnell in it. Unable to bear his solitude any longer, he had driven down from London in the middle of the night.

VIII

Immediately after the General Election of 1886, which restored the Tories to power, Parnell introduced a Land Bill into the House of Commons. The tenants were again in trouble. A serious fall in prices had made the payment of the judicial rents impossible, and Parnell proposed an abatement of rents where it could be proved that the tenants were unable to pay the full amount, but were willing to pay half the amount and arrears; the admission of leaseholders to the benefits of the Act of 1881; and the suspension of legal proceedings for the recovery of rent on payment of half the rent and the arrears. The Bill was rejected on September 21, 1886, by 297 votes to 202. It was soon after this rejection that Parnell fell seriously ill. While he was out of action his subordinates, led by Mr. William O'Brien, invented the Plan of Campaign, which was put into operation in December, 1886. Parnell had warned the Government that if his Land Bill were rejected there would be a revival of agrarian outrage. They soon discovered that his prophecy was true, and they pleaded with the Irish landlords not to insist upon their legal rights in rent. But the Irish landlords were determined on their own destruction, and would not listen to appeals or to reason. They had long since abrogated their duties, and now demanded only their privileges. The end of them could not much longer be delayed, since they were so resolved to bring it about; but until it came, they were resolved to play the implacable parasite without pity or compunction. Sir Michael Hicks-Beach and Sir Redvers Buller endeavoured to dissuade

the landlords from their fatuous firmness, but without success, and the Tory attempt to pacify Ireland was frustrated.

Mr. William O'Brien's Plan of Campaign was that the tenants should offer fair rents to the landlords, and then, if these were refused, bank the money with the local managing committee of the Plan of Campaign, who would now negotiate with the landlords on behalf of the tenants. If the landlords persisted in their refusal to accept the fair rent, the money banked with the committee would be used to protect the tenants from being evicted, and for the general support of tenants' rights. Mr. O'Brien endeavoured to find Parnell to discuss the plan with him, but failed to do so, and then went for advice to Mr. John Dillon, who was invariably amenable to Mr. O'Brien's wishes. The plan was put into operation. Parnell, when he heard of it, was "dead against it." He wanted peace and time to think. Mr. Gladstone was now committed to self-government for Ireland, and Parnell did not wish to jeopardise the chance of getting Home Rule by a revival of peasant passions. But he was a sick man, and his grip on his party had slackened. Mr. Healy, who, perhaps, was not so sapient as he thought himself, wrote to Mr. Labouchere on December 18, 1885, saying that "Parnell is half mad. We always act without him. He accepts this position; if he did not, we should overlook him. Dillon, McCarthy, O'Brien, Harrington, and I settle everything. When we agree, no one can disagree."[1] This came well from the gentleman who, three months later, was to stand shivering in his shoes before his chief in Galway town, and was to be reduced by a single sentence from that chief's lips to a state of adoring servitude. We may doubt whether the Plan of Campaign would ever have been operated had Parnell known, before it was published in the Irish newspapers, anything about it. It provoked the usual outburst of crime and

[1] *Life of Henry Labouchere*, by A. L. Thorold, p. 251.

suffering, and the enactment of a perpetual Coercion Bill. It dragged on through the years 1887, 1888, and 1889, draining away the funds of the National League, as Miss Anna Parnell and her female fanatics had drained away the funds of the Land League. In 1887 Lord Salisbury, exactly one year late, ordered the Tory party to pass a Land Bill which was practically a duplicate of the Bill introduced by Parnell and rejected by the Government in 1886. " Lord Salisbury did in 1887 the precise thing which he had declared in 1886 it would not be ' honest ' or ' expedient ' to do."[1]

It was then that the period of lionising began. Parnell had passed through great unpopularity, which had reached its nadir in the closing months of 1885. He and his colleagues had endured the abuse and contempt of Parliament and press and people with fortitude, and now the reaction in their favour had set in. The neurasthenic young man from Wicklow who had incurred the contempt of Mr. Henry Lucy in 1876 had become the acknowledged equal of Mr. Gladstone and Lord Salisbury. Men deferred to him. A party unquestioningly obeyed him. A nation adored him. The word " adored " is not carelessly used. It is a statement of bare fact to say that the great mass of the Irish people adored Parnell at this time. There were Unionists who felt for him some of the passionate affection which the Nationalists so bountifully bestowed upon him. That affection persists to this day among those who knew him, and has made a legendary figure of him for those who did not. " I know . . . a rabid Unionist," wrote a lady in 1924 to the present writer, " who to this day *loves* Parnell. He says that Mr. Parnell was not a talkative man, but that he would chat freely and laugh heartily with the people about Avondale, and the quarrymen and the miners; but that with upstarts he would have nothing to do (Mr. —— includes the whole Parnellite

[1] *Life of Charles Stewart Parnell*, by R. Barry O'Brien, vol. ii., p. 174.

party among the ' upstarts '); that his most notable trait was his respect for women. . . . Going into the Royal Hotel at Glendalough, eight miles from Avondale, Mr. Parnell heard a commercial traveller speaking offensively to the barmaid, and straightway fought him, gave him a licking with his own fists. . . ." Mr. Barry O'Brien states that " a close alliance was now formed between Irish Nationalists and English Liberals, and the Home Rule cause entered on a new phase. Irish members, who twelve months before had been regarded as pariahs, were now welcomed on Liberal platforms and feted in Liberal drawing-rooms."[1]

Parnell kept himself aloof from these festivities and fetings. He accepted invitations to meetings and to parties, but did not turn up when the time came. This apparent discourtesy was entirely due to his ill-health and the inertia which was growing on him—for Parnell was not a discourteous man even to his enemies. He rarely opened letters. One had to send telegrams to him if one wished a reply from him. Formerly, he had had all the impatience of the highly-nervous man. " If he took a car he generally urged the driver to the utmost speed, and if he missed a train, or found that he would have to wait any appreciable time, he generally chartered a special, on several occasions travelling on the footplate of the engine. Delay in any form was, in fact, abhorrent to one of his highly-strung nervous temperament."[2] But now he was lethargic and slow to move. He broke appointments on the flimsiest pretext or on no pretext at all. He would sit about in a state of languor, as if he were dazed, and could only be induced to rouse himself by accounts of metallurgy. It is very probable that his mind, though not overthrown, was dangerously tilted at this time. His bodily strength was very low, so low that a slight illness would undoubtedly have

[1] *Life of Charles Stewart Parnell*, vol. ii., p. 174.

[2] *Charles Stewart Parnell*, by his brother, John Howard Parnell, p. 182.

killed him. He never completely recovered his health, but that he survived at all was due to the care bestowed upon him by Mrs. O'Shea. But, although he was lethargic, he still possessed the power to dominate other men. The Liberals held a meeting in St. James's Hall in 1887, to which Mr. Morley managed to take him. When it was over, an enthusiastic crowd struggled to get near him and to shake his hand. "He will soon set the English as mad as the Irish," a bystander said, as he listened to the cheering mob.

When he walked about the streets of London, he did so in a furtive manner, partly disguised. One of his colleagues says of him at this time that "he did not like people to talk to him in the streets. He did not wish to be recognised. One day I met him in the street so wrapped up, and wearing a long, shabby coat, with his face half hidden in a big muffler, that I hardly knew him." His colleague, full of that curiosity which followers always have about their leaders, followed him at "a respectful distance," and saw him stop in the Strand where part of it was being repaired by workmen. "Suddenly he wheeled round and saw me. I was quite in a funk, for I was afraid he knew I had been following him all the time. He beckoned to me. I went up to him. 'You are here too,' he said. 'I like looking at these working men. A working man has a pleasant life, when he has plenty to do and is fairly treated.' We then walked together to the House." Mr. Barry O'Brien, who tells that story, tells also another which shows how little Parnell knew of individual members of his party. He was walking once with his secretary, an Ulsterman called Campbell, and an Irish member passed and saluted them. "Who is that?" asked Parnell. "Why, don't you know?" Mr. Campbell replied. "It is one of our party; it is Mr. ——." "Ah!" Parnell exclaimed. "I did not know we had such an ugly man in the party." On one occasion a new member fatuously interrupted a

prominent member of the Government. Parnell, who disliked such behaviour, sent a whip to tell the man not to be "a damned fool." The whip repeated the request exactly as Parnell had made it, and was astonished to discover that the new member was delighted at being noticed at all by his chief. He kept up his interruptions in the hope that he might be noticed again. On another occasion, when a member of his party had been guilty of some meanness, Parnell sent for him and gave him a rebuke that left him limp and almost whimpering. There can rarely have been in the world a man who exacted and received such complete obedience from his followers as Parnell exacted and received from the Irish Nationalists.

Mr. Gladstone during this time was propaganding Home Rule, and Parnell, realising that such work could be better done in England by the ex-Premier than by anyone else, contented himself with pacific efforts. He could not prevent the Plan of Campaign from being used, but he could and did discourage those who used it. He made a celebrated speech to the members of the Eighty Club on May 8, 1888, in which he declared his dislike of it. "I was ill," he said, "dangerously ill. It was an illness from which I have not entirely recovered up to this day. I was so ill that I could not put pen to paper or even read a newspaper. I knew nothing about the movement until weeks after it had started, and even then I was so feeble that for several months, absolutely up to the meeting of Parliament, I was positively unable to take part in any public matter, and was scarcely able to do so for months after. If I had been in a position to advise about it, I candidly admit to you that I should have advised against it. . . . I considered, and still consider, that there were features in the Plan of Campaign, and in the way in which it was necessary it should be carried out, which would have had a bad effect upon the general political situa-

tion—in other words, upon the national question." This speech dashed the enthusiasm of his auditors, but Parnell probably had no thought for them; his thought was for the old man who was to speak on the very next evening at the Memorial Hall in Farringdon Street. Mr. Gladstone was delighted with the speech, and said "boldly that the real authors of the Plan of Campaign are the present Government." Wherever Mr. Gladstone went, he preached the gospel of self-government for Ireland. It was Parnell's part to provide him with support, and he could best do so by lying low. The state of his health would not have kept him low had he had cause to come out of his retreat and fight, for no illness ever kept Parnell out of the front line.

CHAPTER IX

THE PIGOTT FORGERIES

I

We approach the end. Parnell was now forty-one years of age. He had been a member of Parliament for exactly twelve years when on April 18, 1887, *The Times* published one of a series of articles entitled "Parnellism and Crime." On this particular day the article included a facsimile reproduction of a letter alleged to have been signed by him. The body of the letter was in another handwriting. It was dated May 15, 1882, nine days after the murders in the Phœnix Park, and it contained these words:

"Dear Sir,

"I am not surprised at your friend's anger, but he and you should know that to denounce the murders was the only course open to us. To do that promptly was plainly our best policy. But you can tell him and all others concerned that, though I regret the accident of Lord F. Cavendish's death, I cannot refuse to admit that Burke got no more than his deserts. You are at liberty to show him this, and others whom you can trust also, but let not my address be known. He can write to the House of Commons.

"Yours very truly,

"Charles S. Parnell."

Parnell was at Eltham when the letter appeared in *The Times*, and Mrs. O'Shea has given a vivid account of his behaviour when he heard of it. Someone had cut the letter out of the newspaper and pasted it on the gate of Wonersh Lodge, for his residence there was common knowledge in the neighbourhood. People used to lean over the fence to watch him come and go. Mrs. O'Shea had read the letter, and as she was anxious that Parnell should eat his breakfast before he saw it, she kept *The Times* from him. "*The Times*

is unusually stodgy," she said; " do eat your breakfast first." He insisted on seeing the paper, because he had to finish a piece of assaying before going to London, and would not be able to read it except during breakfast. " He read the whole thing, meditatively buttering and eating his toast the while. I supplied him with marmalade, and turned over the folded paper for him so that he could read more easily. He made no remark at all till he had finished breakfast, and carefully clipped the end off his cigar; then, with a smile, he tossed the paper at me, saying, '*Now* for that assaying I didn't finish. Wouldn't you hide your head with shame if your King were so stupid as that, my Queen?' He spent the morning at his crucibles, and was with difficulty persuaded to go up to the House of Commons. When he returned that evening he spent his time weighing the infinitesimal specks of his morning's extraction of gold with the utmost accuracy."

This account considerably differs from that given by Mr. Barry O'Brien in the *Life*, for, according to him, Parnell did not see the letter in *The Times* until he reached the House, where he was asked by Mr. Harrington if he had seen it, and replied that he had not. The discrepancy may have been due to lapse of memory on the part of Mr. O'Brien's informant or to a misunderstanding of what he said by Mr. O'Brien, but we have to remember that Parnell was sometimes untruthful in a pointless way. Dr. Mullen gives an odd instance of his mendacity in *The Story of a Toiler's Life* when he tells how Parnell palpably lied to him about a telegram, although there was no reason on earth why he should have lied about it. It is more probable, however, that his craving for mystery made him reluctant to admit that he had already seen the letter, or that he may have been afraid to let Mr. Harrington know *where* he had seen it. It is a small matter, of no particular consequence, except that it shows the difficulty a biographer has in ascertaining facts about Parnell. Mr.

Harrington led him to the library, and it was there that Parnell made the staggering statement, to which we have already referred, that he " did not make an S like that since 1878." " My God !" said Mr. Harrington to himself; " if this is the way he is going to deal with the letter in the House, there is not an Englishman who will not believe that he wrote it." And, indeed, when he did deny all knowledge of the letter in direct and positive terms about one o'clock in the morning, many members were derisively disinclined to believe him. To them *The Times* was like the Holy Writ. " They put their trust," says Mr. Morley, " in the most serious, the most powerful, the most responsible newspaper in the world; greatest in resources, in authority, in universal renown."[1] Never was trust more ludicrously misplaced. When the forgery was finally exposed, the people of England were astounded to discover that *The Times* had purchased the letters with as little care or caution as a child purchases candy. If Parnell himself had arranged a plan to increase his reputation, he could not have devised accomplices more empty of intelligence and general gumption than was displayed by the directors of *The Times* over the purchase of the Pigott letters.

Among those who accepted the letter as genuine because it had appeared in *The Times* was Lord Salisbury, the Prime Minister. He addressed a meeting at Swansea on April 20, 1887, and used a clumsy sentence which indicated his belief that Parnell was the accomplice of the Invincibles. He denounced Mr. Gladstone for having " mixed on terms of intimacy with those whose advocacy of assassination was well known," and declared that it would be impossible in the history of the British Government to find another instance of a man of Mr. Gladstone's position accepting as an ally a man " tainted with the strong presumption of conniving

[1] *Life of Gladstone*, by John Morley, bk. x., chap. iii., sect. 1.

at assassination." Mr. Morley describes the speech as one " of which precipitate credulity was not the only fault," and adds that " seldom has party spirit led eminent personages to greater lengths of dishonouring absurdity." Mr. Chamberlain, between whom and Parnell there was now no friendship, was touring in Scotland at the time, and he announced the news to his audience with every symptom of delight. This, he said, was Parnell's death-warrant. The letter was reproduced in facsimile in the principal newspapers in America. " It was propagated by the Tory party in pamphlet, in leaflet, and in placard. A by-election was going on at Taunton the moment of its appearance, and a circular was immediately issued to all the electors with a copy of the facsimile letter."[1]

There was unparalleled excitement in Parliament and in the country. One man alone remained unperturbed: Parnell. He had intended to take action against *The Times*, but was dissuaded from doing so by three important members of the House of Commons with whom he took counsel, one of them being Mr. Morley. They advised him that an action, heard before a jury of ignorant and prejudiced London shopkeepers, would probably end in disagreement and be as disastrous to him as a verdict finding him guilty. If the venue of the case had been changed to Dublin, the verdict there would probably be prejudiced in his favour and would not be of any advantage to him. " To obtain a condemnation of *The Times* at the Four Courts, as a means of affecting English opinion, would not be worth a guinea," says Mr. Morley; and Parnell, exercising what must have been tremendous self-restraint, took their advice. The Irish members demanded an investigation of the charges made against their leader by a committee of the House of Commons, but this was refused by the Government, which suggested, instead, that an action should be taken against *The Times*, with the

[1] *The Parnell Movement*, by T. P. O'Connor, M.P., p. 347.

Attorney-General, Sir Richard Webster, as counsel for the Irish. This singular proposal seems still more singular when we find, as presently we shall, that Sir Richard Webster was the counsel engaged by *The Times* to defend it when at last Lord Salisbury's Government was shamed into granting a Commission of Enquiry! Mr. Goschen, who had succeeded Lord Randolph Churchill at the Exchequer, owlishly asked why Mr. Parnell did not go before a jury—if not in London, then in Edinburgh or in Dublin? Neither party would yield. The Irish properly demanded a Government enquiry, the Government improperly refused one; and so the matter impotently concluded. It might have rested there for ever had not *The Times* continued to publish its series of articles, and in one of them caused an ex-M.P., Mr. Frank Hugh O'Donnell, to imagine that he was libelled.

Mr. O'Donnell took action against *The Times*, whose leading counsel was the Attorney-General, Sir Richard Webster, the very gentleman whom the Government had proposed to Mr. Parnell as his counsel if he should sue *The Times* for libel. The Law Officers were permitted to carry on private practice simultaneously with their public practice, and technically there was no reason why Sir Richard Webster should not accept a brief in behalf of *The Times;* but morally there was every reason why he should have refused to do so. The matter was political; his services had already been offered by his Government to Parnell, and been declined on the ground that the proper tribunal was not a court of law, but a committee of the House of Commons; the case was one involving the honour of a political opponent, and the acceptance of a brief in defence of *The Times* must cause many persons to assume that the Cabinet supported the newspaper, and believed the charges which it made to be true. This assumption would be supported for many persons by the recollection of Lord Salisbury's rash speech at Swansea

and Mr. Chamberlain's public exultation in Scotland. A man of more agile wits than Sir Richard Webster, a dull, ponderous, and insufferably solemn man, would not have accepted the brief. Sir Edward Clarke, with a sounder sense of public decency than was possessed by Sir Richard Webster, refused a brief from *The Times* when, in 1889, Parnell sued that journal for libel, and got £5,000 out of it.[1] Sir Edward, of course, was wise *after* Sir Richard had been foolish, and he asserts that there was no reason why the Attorney-General should have declined *The Times's* brief; but that may be fraternal consideration. Two facts remain: one that Sir Edward Clarke was unwilling to follow Sir Richard Webster's example, and the other that Mr. Gladstone, after the exposure of the Pigott forgeries, made a rule debarring the Law Officers from carrying on private practice.[2] This rule was maintained by Lord Salisbury when he returned to power.

Sir Richard Webster, speaking for three days—he was a long-winded gentleman who never omitted or condensed anything—did not content himself with the specific libel which was being tried, but re-opened the entire *Times's* case; " repeated and enlarged upon the charges and allegations in its articles; stated the facts which he proposed to give in evidence; sought to establish that the facsimile letter was really signed by Mr. Parnell; and finally put forward other letters now produced for the first time, which carried complicity and connivance to a further point. . . . Having launched this mass of incriminating imputation, he then suddenly bethought him, so he said, of the hardships which his course would entail upon the Irishmen, and asked that

[1] *The Story of my Life*, by Sir Edward Clarke, K.C., p. 282.

[2] See a curious correspondence on this point between Sir Edward Clarke and Sir Charles Russell (afterwards Lord Russell of Killowen) in the former's biography, p. 306.

in that action he should not be called upon to prove anything at all. The Irishmen and their leader remained under a load of odium that the Law Officer of the Crown had cast upon them and declined to substantiate."[1] That was pretty cool, and might have given pause even to "Peter the Packer," or any of the notorious Irish judges who used the judicial office as if it were the office of the prosecuting counsel.

This extraordinary action on the part of the Attorney-General roused Parnell from his lethargy. He went to Mr. Morley and told him that he would raise an action against *The Times*, but was again dissuaded from doing so, on the grounds already given. Mr. Morley proposed to him that he should make a personal statement in the Commons, which he did "in his most frigid manner." One of the new batch of letters, said to have been written by Parnell, was in the following terms:

"*January* 9, 1882.

"DEAR E.,

"What are these fellows waiting for? This inaction is inexcusable; our best men are in prison, and nothing is being done. Let there be an end of this hesitency. Prompt action is called for. You undertook to make it hot for old Forster and Co. Let us have some evidence of your power to do so. My health is good, thanks.

"Yours very truly,

"CHARLES S. PARNELL."

This preposterous document was the undoing of *The Times*. The misspelt word "hesitency" was the clue to the forger.

Parnell, in the course of his personal statement, asserted in words which left no room for reservation or misunderstanding that he had never written, never signed, never caused or authorised to be written any of the letters which

[1] *Life of Gladstone*, by John Morley, bk. x., chap. iii., sect. 2.

were alleged to be his. That was on Friday, July 6, 1888. On the following Monday he went down to the House to demand the appointment of a Select Committee. An attempt by his previous counsellor, Mr. Morley, was again made to dissuade him from bothering further about the matter, especially as there was now a reaction in his favour and a general disinclination to believe that he was the author of the incriminating letters. He was told that the Government would certainly decline to appoint the Select Committee, and that then he would be no better off than he was, and might even be worse off. But he now declined to be dissuaded. The advice was sound enough up to a point—for the friend who gave it could not know what the Government were prepared to do—but Parnell had reached the point at which counsels of expediency were repellent to him, and he was resolved on enquiry. The Government declined to appoint a Select Committee on the ground that the House was incompetent to deal with the matter. The reasons given for this decision in Mr. Arthur D. Eliott's *Life of Lord Goschen* were such as might have been offered by a Prussian pedant, but they should not have been offered by a body of reputable men professing to maintain the decencies of public life. There is this excuse for Lord Salisbury's Government: They had no belief in the infallibility of the Pope, but they had a profound belief in the infallibility of *The Times;* and they rendered unto the Walters, who owned it, that respect which they would not render unto the Vicar of Christ. It is, perhaps, a minor point that the downfall of Parnell and the ignominy of the Irish would not have been displeasing to them.

But although the Conservatives were not prepared to appoint a Select Committee to enquire into the authenticity of the letters, they were prepared to appoint a commission, " to consist wholly or mainly of judges, with statutory power

to enquire into 'the allegations and charges made against members of Parliament by the defendants in the recent action.'" When the terms of the motion were published, an astonished assembly discovered that the commission was to be of a singularly roving character; for not only was the specific matter of Parnell's alleged letters to be investigated, but also the charges made by *The Times* against *other persons*. Mr. Morley scathingly comments on the enormity of this offer. "A certain member is charged with the authorship of incriminating letters. To clear his character as a member of Parliament, he demands a Select Committee. We decline to give a committee, says the minister, but we offer you a commission of judges, and you may take our offer or refuse, as you please; only the judges must enquire not merely into your question of the letters, but into all the charges and allegations made against all of you, and not these only, but into the charges and allegations made against other people as well."[1] The motion was proposed by Mr. W. H. Smith, who was subsequently detected in a private consultation in his own house with one of *The Times's* proprietors, Mr. Walter, while the Bill to establish the commission was being prepared. Mr. Smith endeavoured to cover this piece of collusion with a pretence that he was merely chatting over old times with his old friend![2]

Mr. Smith spoke for half a minute, and managed to make the House feel that he regarded the whole business as a pother about nothing. Parnell, deeply angry as he had every right to be, told the House that it was absurd to ask him whether he accepted or refused the Bill when the Bill was not printed and no account of its contents had been given; and added that it was still more absurd to offer him any choice whatever in accepting or refusing the Bill. "The Attorney-

[1] *Life of Gladstone*, by John Morley, bk. x., chap. iii., sect. 2.
[2] *The Parnell Movement*, by T. P. O'Connor, M.P., p. 352.

General had said of the story of the facsimile letter that, if it was not genuine, it was the worst libel ever launched on a public man. If the First Lord believed his Attorney, said Mr. Parnell, instead of talking about making a bargain with me, he ought to have come down and said, ' The Government are determined to have this investigation, whether the honourable member, this alleged criminal, likes it or not.' "[1] Eminent members of the Liberal party were of opinion that the insulting offer made by the Conservatives should be refused, but Mr. Gladstone thought that the judicial commission was better than no enquiry at all. Parnell himself was prepared for any investigation, and so the offer, thus infamously made, was accepted.

II

Mr. Henniker Heaton used to tell a story of Parnell at this time, which strikingly illustrates his coldness and detachment. *The Times* had published the forged letter, and Parnell, in an atmosphere of intense excitement, had delivered his short speech denying its authorship. He " then walked into the lobby and engaged me in earnest conversation. Everybody thought he was telling me of the awful political event which was then exercising men's minds. This is what he said to me: ' I have just read in the afternoon papers that a mountain of gold has been discovered in Western Australia, and that some tons of the specimens have been sent home to you.' I said it was true, and that I had in my locker in the House some of the crushed specimens. I gave him a wineglassful of the crushings, and he took it away with him, and, to the bewilderment of his party, no one saw him for a week. On that day week, almost at the same hour, he again appeared in the lobby. Walking up to me he

[1] *Life of Gladstone*, by John Morley, bk. x., chap. iii., sect. 2.

said smilingly: 'I have analysed the specimens, and they go 32 ounces of gold to the ton.' I said he was wrong. He then took from his pocket a scrap of paper and read, '25 ounces gold, 5 ounces silver.' I replied that that was indeed remarkable, for it exactly coincided with the analysis of Johnson, Matthey and Co., the famous metallurgists. Parnell then showed me the small pin-point of gold he had obtained. I expressed surprise at his work. He said: 'The fact is, I take an interest in the matter. I have a small workshop to test minerals in the mountains of Wicklow, some portion of which I own.' The astonishing thing is that, while his hundreds of thousands of adherents were fulminating against *The Times*, he was quietly working away, testing minerals in his laboratory."[1]

III

The commission began its work on September 17, 1888. The commissioners were Mr. Justice Hannen, Mr. Justice Day, and Mr. Justice Smith. They sat for one hundred and twenty-eight days, rising for the last time on November 22, 1889. Over four hundred and fifty witnesses were examined, including Delaney, one of the Phœnix Park murderers, a middle-sized, stoutish man, with yellow-red hair, looking more like a Russian than an Irishman, who gave evidence in favour of *The Times*. This murderer, whose brother was hanged, had been condemned to death, but, on confessing, was reprieved and given a life sentence. The proceedings were drawn out to the point of weariness by Sir Richard Webster, who, in spite of protests from the commissioners, insisted on reading masses of literature, some of which had singularly little relevance to the enquiry. His object plainly was to exhaust the public interest in the case, which he did until

[1] Extracted from an article in *Leisure Hour*.

the Sardonic Dramatist shoved the dull lawyer aside and made drama. It was not until the fiftieth day of the commission (February 14, 1889) that the investigation of the letters began. In the previous sittings a most amazing medley of witnesses were examined to prove what no one disputed, that crimes had been committed. "There was the peasant from Kerry in his freize swallow-tail and knee-breeches, and the woman in her scarlet petticoat who runs barefoot over the bog in Galway. The convicted member of a murder club was brought up in custody from Mountjoy Prison or Maryborough. One of the most popular of the Irish representatives had been fetched from his dungeon, and was to be seen wandering through the lobbies in search of his warders. . . . Witnesses were produced in a series that seemed interminable to tell the story of five-and-twenty outrages in Mayo, of as many in Cork, of forty-two in Galway, of sixty-five in Kerry, one after another, and all with immeasurable detail. Some of the witnesses spoke no English, and the English of others was hardly more intelligible than Erse. Long extracts were read out from four hundred and forty speeches. The counsel on one side produced a passage that made against the speaker, and then the counsel on the other side found and read some qualifying passage that made as strong for him. The three judges groaned. . . ."[1]

Those, seemingly, were days of leisure, when lawyers could waste time with impunity. There was a vivid interval when a spy, calling himself Le Caron—his real name was Beach, and he was a native of Colchester—was examined. It was this man's evidence which caused Mr. Asquith to declare that Parnell was as great a statesman as Bismarck, because of the skill with which he had grappled with the Clan-na-Gael and the Fenians of America. Le Caron, seeking to incriminate Parnell, proved him. This was one of the most

[1] *Life of Gladstone*, by John Morley, bk. x., chap. iii., sect. 3.

honourable of the witnesses brought against Parnell. The fact that he was a spy does not denote that he was not a courageous and honourable man. There is an unjust prejudice against spies, who are invariably shot during a war on detection, but no just man can deny that to do this is an abominable outrage on decency. The work done by a spy is done for his country with as much courage, greater risk, and less credit as the work done by a soldier, and should be similarly regarded. Le Caron owed nothing to Ireland or Parnell: he owed something to his own country, and he paid what he owed in his own fashion. In comparison with some of the people brought by *The Times* to testify against Parnell, Le Caron was a man of incorruptible character.

On the fiftieth day of the commission the letters were examined. It was then that the fabric of invented evidence began to crack. Mr. Soames, the solicitor for *The Times*, who was remotely related to Mrs. O'Shea,[1] acknowledged that when his clients published the facsimile letter on April 18, 1887, they had no evidence which could stand examination in a court of law that the letter was authentic. A Mr. E. Caulfield Houston, the son of a prison warder, and formerly a junior reporter on the staff of the Dublin *Daily Express*, had been given a job as the secretary of the Irish Loyal and Patriotic Union, and, in his eagerness to justify his appointment, set about collecting proofs of Nationalist complicity in crime. Houston's guiding principle seemed to be that anything which was adverse to the Nationalists was true, anything that favoured them was false. He had compiled a pamphlet, entitled *Parnellism Unmasked*, out of materials supplied to him by Richard Pigott, the former proprietor of the group of papers purchased by Parnell in 1881. It occurred to the ingenuous Mr. Houston that he might be able to secure some evidence against Parnell from his old

[1] *Charles Stewart Parnell*, by Katharine O'Shea, vol. ii., p. 138.

friend Pigott, and so one night in the winter of 1885 he went to a house in Sandycove Avenue, Kingstown, and found in dire poverty Pigott, whose sole means of support at this time was the money he received for articles "By an Old Fenian" in the *St. James's Gazette*. Houston's anticipation that Pigott would be able to find evidence of criminal conduct on Parnell's part was fulfilled, but it is certain that if he had demanded evidence of criminal conduct on the part of Queen Victoria or the Moderator of the General Assembly, Pigott would have produced it. At any moment of the day or night Pigott would have produced evidence for or against anybody. He was to be given a guinea a day, hotel and travelling expenses, and a large sum for any documents he should discover.[1] Pigott was now on velvet, and he took care not to get off it too soon. He went to Lausanne, to America, many times to Paris, here, there, and everywhere, until his pockets were almost bulging with guineas. He kept up his investigations as long as possible—until the impatient Houston, himself being badgered by his employers, began to clamour for proofs of Parnell's crimes—and then, in a manner which would have drawn derisive laughter from the audience at a penny gaff, he produced the letters.

In March, 1886, he informed Houston that incriminating documents were at that moment in a black bag in Paris. They had probably been left in mistake by some of the Invincibles or their accomplices. Copies of eleven letters, five said to have been signed by Parnell, and six by Patrick Egan, the treasurer of the Land League, were given to Houston, who showed them to Mr. Buckle of *The Times* and Mr. W. T. Stead of the *Pall Mall Gazette*, all of whom

[1] The funds were provided by three prominent Unionists: £70 by Sir Rowland Blennerhassett, £250 by Mr. Jonathan Hogg, and £450 by Lord Richard Grosvenor, the ex-Liberal Whip, who subsequently became Lord Stalbridge and a staunch Unionist.

declined to have anything to do with the matter. Pigott was now requested to produce the originals of the letters, which he agreed to do, and in July, 1886, he went to Paris and put up at the Hotel St. Petersbourg. Houston and Dr. Maguire, Professor of Moral Philosophy at Trinity College, Dublin, followed him, and established themselves at the Hotel des Deux Mondes. On the night of their arrival Pigott conspiratorially came to their hotel carrying the original letters. The men from whom he had obtained them, named, so he said, Maurice Murphy and Tom Brown, were waiting downstairs, and he must immediately take them the money promised for the letters or the letters themselves! One gathered that Murphy and Brown were desperate as well as needy characters.

Dr. Maguire and Houston went into an adjoining room, where they held a short consultation and scrutinised the documents. The Moral Philosopher, whose simplicity of mind entitles him to be regarded as the original of all the stage professors, was delighted with the letters, and lent Houston £850 in Bank of England notes to pay for them. Houston then went back to the room where Pigott was waiting and gave him £605, of which sum £500 was for Brown and Murphy, and £105 for Pigott himself, a bonus for a good and faithful servant of the Irish Loyal and Patriotic Union. The balance was, presumably, a slight token of Mr. Houston's respect for Mr. Houston. No one saw the mysterious Brown or the mysterious Murphy. No one asked to see them. Houston did not even enquire what their names were. No one enquired about them until the time of the Special Commission. Pigott departed with £605 in his pocket, a little saddened, perhaps, by the knowledge that the gay days of jaunting about the world on a guinea a day and all expenses paid were over. But £605 in crinkling notes were comforting to the man, and there was a prospect that more money

might be earned in the same way. He would be able to provide for the four little boys in Sandycove Avenue for a long while out of the proceeds of his industry ! . . .

Houston hurried back to London with his precious letters, and took them to the Marquis of Hartington, with the statement that he thought his lordship ought to know about them. He asked for advice on the proper way to use them, but Lord Hartington declined to give him any. He probably did not neglect to inform some of his colleagues of the existence of the documents. Houston, discouraged by his reception by Lord Hartington, went for a third time to Mr. Buckle of *The Times*, and was now referred to Mr. John Cameron Macdonald, the manager of the paper, a gentleman whose Scottish names seem singularly irreconcilable with his incautious and infantile conduct. Macdonald did not ask any questions. He took Houston's word " throughout," although he had known Houston only slightly before this time (October, 1886). We begin to realise what bitterness of feeling existed over the Irish Question when we discover the ineffable Mr. Macdonald, a native of a country whose inhabitants are renowned for their astuteness and caution, risking the reputation of the greatest newspaper in the world in this careless fashion. In cross-examination he acknowledged that he had not then, or at any other time, asked Houston where he had got the letters, from whom he had got them, or how he had got them. He made no enquiries of any sort. He simply showed the letters, for which he paid Houston £1,780, to *The Times's* solicitor, Mr. Soames, and to a handwriting expert named Inglis, and then, on the strength of their advice, he charged an eminent man with complicity in crime !

No wonder there was dismay in court when Mr. Soames and Mr. Macdonald made their remarkable disclosures.

Between March 7, when the first of the articles on " Par-

nellism and Crime" appeared, and April 18, when the facsimile letter was published, Houston divulged the name of Pigott to Mr. Macdonald.

"After Mr. Houston made this communication to you, did you make enquiries from other people as to who Pigott was?"

"No," said Mr. Macdonald.

"What his antecedents were?"

Mr. Macdonald said, "No; I had no means of doing so."

It was with such evidence as that that the author of the leading article which appeared in *The Times* on April 18, 1887, felt himself in a position to write "that we possess, and have had in our custody for some time, documentary evidence which has a most serious bearing on the Parnellite conspiracy, and which, *after a most careful and minute scrutiny*, is, we are quite satisfied, authentic. We produce one document in facsimile to-day by a process the accuracy of which cannot be impugned, and we invite Mr. Parnell to explain how his signature has become attached to such a letter." The italics are the present writer's. One surmises that Pigott, when he read those confident words, must have sniggered to himself, even if he trembled a trifle.

IV

All this time Parnell was haunted by one dreadful suspicion: that the author of the forged letters was Captain O'Shea; and he prowled about London in search of evidence which would convict him. There was a woman in a mean suburban street who, he thought, could give him information, and he went in company with one of his colleagues to her house to confront her. "One winter's morning he called on a friend of mine," says Mr. James L. Carew,[1] "and routed

[1] *Irish Weekly Independent*, Saturday, October 7, 1893, in an article entitled "My Captain and Friend."

him out of bed, and, without telling him his mission, got him into a cab and drove with him to a comparatively unknown street in the north-east of London. Though he chatted all the time, he never disclosed his object till he got close to his destination. Then he told my friend to get out and go to a certain public-house, and enquire if the proprietress were at home and could be seen. He did so, and found her absent, but was told she would return in the evening. He came back with this information. For a moment Mr. Parnell reflected as if undecided what to do. He then jumped out, and, dismissing the cab, declared his intention to wait for her return. 'What, all day?' said my friend. 'Yes, and all night if necessary,' was his reply; 'but not at a place where we can be watched.' After reconnoitring the place, it was decided to take up a position in a tobacconist's shop that commanded a full view of the public-house. For ten long, weary hours they waited there until the dusk of evening, when the object of their search returned. They then interviewed her. For a long time she would give no information whatever. Then, seeing that he was not to be baulked, she commenced to prevaricate. Mr. Parnell led her on from one pitfall to another, until he had her perplexed in a mass of inconsistencies. Then, discarding his gentle manner, he fixed his eyes on her and said savagely: 'Madam, you have been prevaricating all this time; come, tell me the truth,' adding in his sweetest tone, 'I am Mr. Parnell.' She told all she knew, and the information thus acquired furnished the material for the cross-examination of one of the leading witnesses for *The Times*, who posed as a Constitutionalist in Irish politics." This posing Constitutionalist was probably Captain O'Shea, who gave evidence during the enquiry.

It was a long while before Parnell could be persuaded to believe that O'Shea was not the forger. The relations between the two men were now those of hatred, and O'Shea

certainly made no secret of his intention to ruin Parnell if he could. There is a strange passage in one of his letters to his wife. O'Shea was in Dublin, endeavouring to get Parnell to nominate him for one of the constituencies in Liverpool, which Parnell was unwilling to do.[1] He wrote to his wife from the Shelbourne Hotel on November 2, 1885, a fretful letter,[2] from which the following passage is an extract: "Of course I know nothing about your political movements and arrangements. All I know is that I am not going to lie in the ditch. I have been treated in blackguard fashion, and I mean to hit back a stunner. I have everything ready; no drugs could make me sleep last night, and I packed my shell with dynamite. It cannot hurt my friend [Mr Chamberlain], and it will send a blackguard's reputation with his deluded countrymen into smithereens. I have got your telegram. He won't be of high 'importance' soon. . . ."

Mrs. O'Shea probably imagined that her husband was about to divorce her, and it was no doubt in her fear of this that she went to Lord Richard Grosvenor, the Liberal Whip, who was later to change his politics and his title and provide some of the money for Pigott, and asked him to use his influence to get her husband nominated for a safe seat. But it seems probable that O'Shea had heard from Houston that Parnell was likely to be implicated in the Phœnix Park murders. Houston had had dealings with Pigott between September and December, 1885. O'Shea was in Dublin in November, and had met Houston. It is reasonable to assume that he had been told by the industrious and jubilant secretary of the Irish Loyal and Patriotic Union that great and devastating events were about to happen. Sir Charles Russell actually

[1] In 1886, at the last moment, he was nominated for the Exchange Division of Liverpool, but lost the seat by a few votes. "The Presbyterians wouldn't vote for me," he said in explanation of his defeat.

[2] *Charles Stewart Parnell*, by Katharine O'Shea, vol. ii., p. 90.

quoted a portion of this letter to O'Shea, and asked him if he had any ill-feeling against Parnell, but O'Shea denied that he had ever felt any more than a passing ill-temper. The matter was not pressed further for good and sufficient reasons. Many persons present in court knew that O'Shea's wife was Parnell's mistress, and that there was a subsidiary drama being performed in that scene in which only two characters appeared: the husband and the lover. The tragedy was gaining intensity: the political and social passions were receiving the terrible addition of a wounded husband's jealous rage. The assumption that O'Shea knew about the plot against Parnell is supported by the fact that *The Times* endeavoured, through Mr. Chamberlain, to get help from O'Shea.[1]

But whatever the explanation of this remarkable passage may be, there is no doubt whatever that Parnell was convinced that O'Shea was the forger, and that the forgery was committed as an act of revenge. It is doubtful whether he ever quite rid himself of the belief that O'Shea was connected with it. When a question was put to O'Shea about the forged letters, he began by deploring the attempt to drag him into the matter at all, but since " the unfortunate question was asked, he should say he believed that they were all written by Mr. Parnell." He was not an expert in handwriting, but he felt certain that the signatures were Mr. Parnell's. A moment or two later he left the box, and shortly afterwards departed for Spain.

But he was not now the elegant gentleman who had astounded the electors of Clare with his fine clothes and his jaunty airs. Instead, he was prematurely old and nervous. His looks were entirely altered. The colour of his face and of his moustache and whiskers had changed. He was restless during examination, twisting and turning his hands in an extraordinary fashion, and he kept his eyes steadily on the

[1] See Mr. T. P. O'Connor's *The Parnell Movement*.

floor, rarely raising them to meet the gaze of counsel or anyone in court. When the Attorney-General, pointing to Parnell, asked him if he were on friendly terms with him during his membership of the House of Commons, O'Shea mechanically turned towards Parnell, who stared at him with a look of awful hatred in his eyes, and then swiftly averting his gaze, said " Yes " to Sir Richard Webster's question. Sometimes, when he was questioned, he clasped his head with his hand and closed his eyes as if he were trying to remember the answers, and throughout his examination and cross-examination he manifested every sign of intense nervousness. Very rarely in that court can the atmosphere have been so charged with suppressed rage and hatred as it was on that afternoon. When at last, after two contemptuous questions from Mr. Healy, he was allowed to leave the box, he smiled wanly at Sir Richard, but that stony-faced man did not smile at him. He gave no glance towards the man with burning brown eyes, but as he stumbled from the court, trembling with wrath and apprehension, he knew that now and for the rest of their lives there could be no pretences between them, that now and for ever they were enemies waiting for the moment when the death-blow could be delivered.

This strange man, the enigma of the whole story, will come before us again for a few moments, but we may take our leave of him here. He had great talent, but he seems not to have had character. In suitable circumstances, he might have followed a career of considerable worth, but the circumstances were not created for him. His climbing father had thrown him into extravagant company with instructions to be as extravagant as them all, and he had obeyed his father's instructions with a fidelity that appalled his parent. The middle-class Irish solicitor who *would* be a gentleman of the smartest style did his son a grave disservice when he directed his abilities towards mean and snobbish ends; and the dis-

service done to him by his father was not rectified by the snivelling piety of his mother, whose polite praises of the Almighty must have been as tedious to Him as they were to Katharine O'Shea. It is conceivable that Captain O'Shea might never have achieved any more than he did, whatever his circumstances were, for a mean mind cannot be otherwise than mean in any state. But we cannot deny that this unfortunate man suffered severely in an encounter which, however it ended, could not result in any happiness for him. Thousands of his countrymen regarded him as a complacent husband, ready to consent to his wife's adultery if it brought him a job, and he was maligned in print and in public speech as if he were the lowest of mankind. He does not command our respect, but neither does he deserve this condemnation. We may never know what agonies of mind he endured or what fierce resentments he nourished in his heart, but we may be assured of this, that when he died on April 22, 1905, at 19, Lansdowne Place, in Hove, a short distance from where, fourteen years earlier, Parnell himself had died, he left the dusty stage without regret. His age was then sixty-five, and he had borne the bitter memories of his mischance for nearly half his life. This was a man born to play a part which could not please anyone, himself least of all, and he played it in circumstances which bereft him of sympathy or compassion.

V

On Wednesday, February 20, 1889, Richard Pigott entered the witness-box. There was some excitement when he was first called, for he was not in court. Everybody stood up to watch him enter, and as the minutes passed without his appearance, many persons began to suspect that he had disappeared; for the cross-examination of Mr. Caulfield Houston by Sir Charles Russell earlier in the day had deepened the

suspicion that there was some knavery behind the purchase of the letters. But Pigott was quietly eating a meal in the bar of the Duval Restaurant across the street from the court, and came to the witness-box when he had finished his food. It was ten minutes to three when he took the oath. His appearance was not impressive, and when he bowed almost obsequiously to the three judges, one of whom heavily frowned upon him, the feeling that he was disreputable increased. He spoke shortly and drily, and seemed, despite his look of stolidity, to be nervous. For the greater part of the afternoon his answer to each question was, " Oh yes." The first part of his examination was uninteresting, and it was not until just before the court rose that the subject of the letters was broached. When he entered the box again the following morning he looked deadly pale, and appeared to have had a sleepless night. He began by admitting that certain statements which he had made to Archbishop Walsh, of Dublin, were unfounded. He said also that he had protested to Houston against the publication of the facsimile letter in *The Times* on the ground that this was a breach of faith. Houston, looking pale and scared, was called back to the box, and asked whether he had received this letter. He denied all knowledge of it. Thereafter the wretched Pigott floundered from lie to lie, periodically exposing lies told on previous occasions with a sort of childlike simplicity. The production of his letters to Dr. Walsh had been a shock to him, but he was to receive another and severer shock later in the day, when Mr. (afterwards Sir Thomas) Wemyss Reid, the biographer of Mr. Forster, produced letters in which Pigott had begged for funds from the late Chief Secretary for Ireland.[1] He had forgotten about these letters or imagined that they were destroyed. In the letters to Mr. Forster he appealed for a reward for his good services to the Crown. Simultaneously

[1] *Ante*, p. 176.

with these letters he had been writing to Mr. Egan, of the Land League, begging for money for his services to Nationalism. The whining tone of the letters was so ludicrous that the court, including the judges, heartily laughed at them, and there came a moment when the writhing rascal cried out, " This is very amusing to you, but it certainly is not to me," only to find that his protest increased the laughter.

During the afternoon Sir Charles Russell reminded Pigott that on the previous day he had written a number of words at his (Sir Charles's) request. Among those which he had been asked to write down was the word " hesitancy." One can imagine the joy with which Sir Charles, when he examined the list, saw that it was misspelt " hesitency," as it had been in the facsimile letter in *The Times*. Now, beyond all doubt, Pigott was delivered into his hands. . . . The court then adjourned.

On Tuesday morning, February 26, 1889, in a crowded court, which included Mrs. Gladstone, the usher called for Richard Pigott, but Richard Pigott did not answer to his name. The usher went into the passage where the witnesses usually sat, and came back looking surprised. He whispered something to Mr. (afterwards Sir) Henry Cunynghame, the secretary of the commission; then to Mr. Soames, the solicitor for *The Times;* and then to Mr. Soames's assistants. Sir Charles Russell glanced impatiently in the direction of the witness-box—the strain on that great lawyer at that moment must have been nearly unendurable—but still the usher made no explanation of the delay. At last Sir Charles said: " Where is the witness?" The court was very still and silent. The Attorney-General, in an aggrieved tone, replied, " We don't know," and instantly the public, as one man, exclaimed, " He's bolted!" Sir Charles applied for a warrant for Pigott's arrest, which was granted, and the court adjourned for half an hour.

VI

We go back three days. On Saturday evening, February 23, 1889, Pigott, fearing that he would be arrested for perjury and thinking to placate Parnell by confession, went to the house of Mr. Henry Labouchere at 24, Grosvenor Gardens, with whom he had already had some dealings, and offered to confess. Mr. Labouchere had performed great service to the Irish party, and had once before brought Pigott to the point of confession in the very presence of Parnell, but the wriggling creature had refused on the following morning to put it into writing. Now, however, he was all eagerness to write down his shameful history. Mr. Labouchere sent a servant to his neighbour, Mr. George Augustus Sala, to invite that popular journalist to come and hear what Pigott had to say. Mr. Sala came, and immediately Pigott began in a low, half-musing tone to dictate his confession. He seemed to be over sixty years of age to Mr. Sala, who looked at the shabby-genteel man with the inquisitive, impersonal eyes of the born newspaper man. He was cool, clear, and coherent, and seemed to regard his crime as a peccadillo. But Sala noticed that his hand shook, and that it never stopped shaking. For a few moments Sala was left alone with him, while Mr. Labouchere went to find refreshments. They said little to each other, and that little was curt. Pigott picked up *The Times*, and remarked that the London papers were inconveniently large ! . . .[1] One of them had been too large for him.

When the confession was signed and witnessed, Pigott went away and spent the evening at the Alhambra Music Hall. On Monday he wrote to his housekeeper, sending her a blank signed cheque. "Take it to Mr. —— at the Ulster Bank in Baggot Street, and he will fill it up and give you the cash.

[1] See the *Life of George Augustus Sala*, by himself, vol. ii.

It will only be, I fear, some five pounds. I fear you may look out for the worst." He sent her a telegram on the same day, instructing her to burn all the papers she would find in a black box, which she did. She was a poor, bewildered woman, and she never thought of examining them, " and could not for the life of her say what they were about." The last that was seen of him at Anderton's Hotel in Fleet Street, where he was staying under police guard, was about eleven o'clock on Monday night. How he managed to elude the police remains unknown, but he was in Paris on Tuesday, and in Madrid on Thursday, where he took a room at an hotel, and spent his first afternoon in visiting churches and picture-galleries. There was something naïve about this man, for immediately he got to Madrid he telegraphed to Mr. Shannon, his Dublin solicitor, at the office of Mr. Soames in Lincoln's Inn Fields, asking him " to send what he promised " to him under the name of " Ronald Ponsonby " at the Hotel Ambajadores. Mr. Soames handed this telegram to the police, and instructions were telegraphed to Madrid to have him arrested.

On Friday, March 1, the morning after he had sent his telegram to Mr.Shannon, Pigott descended from his room in the belief, seemingly, that a telegraphic money order would be waiting for him. His disappointment on learning that there was no message of any sort was acute, and he became anxious and uneasy. At half-past four in the afternoon the police had traced him, and were in the hotel. They went upstairs to his room on the first floor, and sent an interpreter to tell him that they were outside. For a moment or two he was unnerved, then he recovered himself, and said: " All right; I'll see the gentlemen !" The police entered, and Pigott, murmuring something about his luggage, stooped over his handbag and took something from it. An officer leapt forward to seize him, but was too late. Pigott put the pistol into his

mouth and pulled the trigger. When his clothes were opened by the police, they found a soiled scapular about his neck bearing the letters I.H.S. surmounted by a cross.

They buried him in Spain.

VII

On the day on which the news was announced that Pigott had fled, there came another sensation to stir the excited mind of the nation. Dr. Maguire, the Moral Philosopher, who had handed £850 to Houston with which to pay Pigott for the letters, died suddenly in a house in Eaton Place. A rumour reached Dublin that he had committed suicide on hearing of the debacle, but the Moral Philosopher's death was due, not to remorse or shame, but to pneumonia following a chill caught on the previous Thursday while crossing the Irish Sea on his journey to London to hear Pigott give evidence.

On the following day, Wednesday, Mr. Parnell went with Mr. Harrington to Scotland Yard to enquire if there were any news of Pigott. Mr. Parnell carried the mysterious black bag without which he was now rarely seen, but when he left the Yard he forgot to take it with him. One does not know with what thrills of anticipation that old black bag was opened, but they were soon turned to disappointment, for it contained only a pair of dry socks and a pair of boots. Mrs. O'Shea's care of his health, and his obedience to her rules for his well-being, had momentarily made a sensation in Scotland Yard.

VIII

And now Mr. Parnell, who had been the most unpopular man in England two or three years earlier, was a public hero. When he left the Law Courts after the Pigott exposure, a

great crowd lustily cheered him. Wherever he went he was greeted with affection and enthusiasm. The commission was not yet concluded—it dragged on for many days after Pigott died—and Parnell himself had still to be examined; but in the opinion of the general public it was over. A sense of shame was widely felt at the thought that a great newspaper had tried to drag a distinguished man into disgrace without even attempting to assure itself that its agents were honest. If Mr. Gladstone's Home Rule Bill had been under discussion then ! . . .

Hardly had his cross-examination ended with Sir Richard Webster's statement, " I have no more questions to ask you, Mr. Parnell !" than the National Liberal Club elected him an honorary life member. The city of Edinburgh presented him with its freedom. The Eighty Club for the second time entertained him to dinner, and saw him offer his hand in reconciliation to Lord Spencer. A great crowd of Liberals assembled at St James's Hall to greet him, and the Rev. Hugh Price Hughes, a temperamental Welsh Methodist, loudly extolled him. At a soirée of the Women's Liberal Association held in the Grosvenor Galleries he robbed Mr. Gladstone of his limelight. When he rose to address the House of Commons for the first time after the exposure of the plot against him he received a great and singular ovation. " As he stepped along the benches to his place, the whole of the Liberal party above and below the gangway rose to do homage to him. There was the stately form of Sir William Harcourt—who looked inclined to wipe the stain of Parnellite juice from the corners of his mouth—bending in homage to Mr. Parnell; and there, more remarkable still, was that statesman of peerless accomplishments and experience, Mr. Gladstone, leaning with his hand upon the table, and turning and bowing towards Mr. Parnell. Sir, it was an incident which might have disturbed the balance of mind of a smaller

man. I saw Mr. Parnell standing erect among the whole standing crowd. He took no notice of it whatever. He had not asked them to get up. When they had finished standing up they sat down, and he took no notice of their rising or their sitting down; and when they had resumed their places he proceeded to make a perfectly calm and quiet speech, in which he made not the smallest reference, direct or indirect, to the incident, extraordinary as it was, which had just happened. I thought, as I looked at him that night, that that man was a born leader of men—calm, self-confident, and powerful; and depend upon it that, so long as Mr. Parnell lives, he is a living force with whom the Gladstonians will have to reckon if they want to enter into alliances for the sake of Home Rule." The speaker is Sir Edward Clarke, and the listeners are his constituents at Plymouth.[1]

Thus ended a shameful episode in the history of a great newspaper and a great political party. The Conservatives did not, indeed, conspire to incriminate Parnell, but they were accessories after the fact. Some incurable purblindness prevented them from realising that Parnell was a Conservative as they were Conservatives, and that the surest guarantee of a friendly Ireland was his chieftainship. He hated England, but only as Englishmen hate it, as a virile, independent son will hate his family when it seeks to subject him to its unwarranted laws. For one moment the Conservatives were illuminated, in that moment when Lord Carnarvon met Parnell in the house in Grosvenor Square, but the moment passed and the light failed, and the peace that Parnell might have made in Ireland was not made.

[1] *The Story of my Life*, by the Rt. Hon. Sir Edward Clarke, K.C., p. 275.

CHAPTER X

THE DIVORCE SUIT

I

We pause for a moment to glance back at the scenes already performed before we witness the few that remain. Parnell was now in his forty-fourth year, and had been a member of the House of Commons for fifteen years. In that time he had grown from a shy, stammering, nervous, and extraordinarily ignorant young man into one of the most powerful leaders in the history of English politics. The Irish party, which had been a disregarded and derided gang of amiable job-hunters when he joined it, was now an influential and highly-disciplined body of resolute and tireless patriots serving their country at some cost to themselves. This change in the status and character of the party was almost entirely the work of Parnell. We may be sure that it could not have been made without his help. He had achieved unity where there had been disorder, and authority where there was none. The place-hunters and time-servers are never quite eliminated from any society, but they were nearly eliminated from Parnell's party. Finally, he had compelled the English Parliament to concern itself with Irish affairs, and had put Home Rule into the programme of the Liberal party. Self-government for Ireland was no longer a matter for academic discussion on a Parliamentary off-day, but a practical proposal which might at any moment become a fact. When we are tempted to doubt the ability or greatness of Parnell, we need only test him in one way: what was the state of the Irish party before he took command of it, what was its state during the eleven years he led it, and what was its state for thirty years after his death? The test does not defeat him.

After his triumph over *The Times*, he seemed to be on

the eve of great events. He made his only visit to Hawarden, where he delighted the Gladstones with his amiability and his practical sense. One night at dinner, Miss Gladstone, who was his neighbour, said to him: "Mr. Parnell, who is the greatest actor you've ever seen?" "Your father," he replied; and Mr. Gladstone chuckled. It must have seemed to the old statesman, now in his eighty-first year, that this strange young man, nearly forty years his junior, had a high destiny before him. He noted in his diary that "he is certainly one of the very best people to deal with that I have ever known." The scene was very fair then, and when Parnell departed from Hawarden and stopped at Liverpool to make a speech full of praise of the host he had lately left, it seemed as if the uncrowned King of Ireland were about to be crowned. But even while he was at Hawarden Captain O'Shea was putting the match to the powder which was presently to blow Parnell's power to pieces. On December 24, 1889, he filed a petition for divorce from his wife, citing Parnell as co-respondent.

There is no need to recapitulate the case here. In itself it was of no interest, nor did it reveal much that was not already known. Sir Edward Clarke, who led for the petitioner, has given an account of the case in his autobiography, and it will be sufficient if we say here that Parnell, who was not legally represented, refused to offer any defence and compelled Mrs. O'Shea to withdraw hers. She had instructed her counsel, Mr. Frank Lockwood, Q.C., to plead connivance on the part of her husband and to countercharge him with adultery with her sister, Mrs. Steele. Both these charges were withdrawn: they were also denied. A decree of divorce, with the custody of all the children under sixteen, was granted to the petitioner by Mr. Justice Butt on Monday, November 17, 1890.

But we may note, with what irony we possess, one odd

incident of the trial for its remarkable results. A servant stated in her evidence that one day, when Mrs. O'Shea was living at Medina Terrace, Brighton, her husband unexpectedly called on her while Parnell, who was known as Mr. Stewart, was in her room. Mr. " Stewart " got away by the fire-escape, and a few minutes later presented himself at the front-door and enquired for Mrs. O'Shea as if he had just that moment arrived. The incident excited great laughter, and jokes were made about fire-escapes in music-halls and drawing-rooms. Even Lord Salisbury, that taciturn Tory, unbent on a public platform and said of a politician who had escaped to France to evade arrest: " Some escape by water and some escape by fire." A reference to the fire-escape was part of the stock-in-trade of Mr. Timothy Michael Healy, the Viceroy in a bowler hat and a reach-me-down suit, who was not then aspiring to semi-royal honours. One night, soon after the suit was heard, the late Sir Herbert Tree entertained Captain O'Shea to dinner. He said to him: " I think you'll agree that ridicule can kill a man in England as surely as it can in France." " What do you mean ?" demanded O'Shea. " Well," Tree replied, " take your case. The fire-escape killed Parnell !" " Yes," said O'Shea, " and the fun of it is *there was no fire-escape !*" It appeared that the servant, explaining Parnell's swift disappearance, had used the word " fire-escape " as one might use the expression " flown away on wings."

II

The first determination of the Irish party was to stand by their leader. There was scarcely a dissentient from this determination. The National League met in Dublin on Tuesday, November 18, 1890, the day after Captain O'Shea had obtained his decree, and pledged itself, under the chair-

manship of Mr. John Redmond (who never wavered for a moment from his duty and devotion to his leader), to stand by Parnell, despite the divorce. It has been pleaded in extenuation of the Seceders, as they were afterwards known, that they had been deceived by Parnell over the suit. He had assured them that he would come out of it all right. So he did, for it was a lie to say that he had broken up a happy home or that he had robbed a devoted husband of a loving wife; but they, as they pretended, thought that the suit against him would fail as the charges of *The Times* had failed. The pretence was a poor one. All the facts of the case were known to the men who assembled in Dublin on the day after the divorce to pledge themselves in solemn words to the support of their chief, but no man declared himself morally appalled by them. In England there were rumblings in the dungeons of Dissent. The Rev. Hugh Price Hughes, another emotional Celt, but this time a Welsh one, who had wrought himself into a state of hysteria on the platform of St. James's Hall after the exposure of the Pigott forgeries, now wrought himself into another state of hysteria, and had the hardihood to denounce Parnell as " the most infamous adulterer of this century." These rumblings of Dissent made the Irishmen more resolved to stand by their leader. They held a meeting in the Leinster Hall, Dublin, on Thursday, November 20, 1890, where their resolve was boldly announced.

Mr. T. M. Healy was ill at that time, but some of his colleagues visited him, and were asked whether the resolutions had been drafted. The answer was " No," whereupon Mr. Healy exclaimed: " Then give me a sheet of paper and I will write them. We'll teach these damned Nonconformists to mind their own business." He drew up the resolutions, and, ill though he was, went to the Leinster Hall meeting, where he declared to a cheering crowd that " for

Ireland and for Irishmen, Mr. Parnell is less a man than an institution. We have," he continued, " under the shadow of his name secured a power and authority in the councils of Great Britain and the world such as we never possessed before; and when I see a demand made for retirement and resignation I ask you to remember the futility thereof. Were Mr. Parnell to-morrow to resign his seat for Cork he would instantly be re-elected. . . . I say it would be foolish and absurd in the highest degree were we, at a moment like this, because of a temporary outcry over a case that in London would be forgotten to-morrow if there were a repetition of the Whitechapel murders . . . I say we would be foolish and criminal if we, the seasoned politicians who have seen and who have been able to watch the vagaries and tempests of political passages—if we, upon an occasion of this kind, at the very first blast of opposition, surrendered the great chief who had led us so far forward. If we, who have been for ten years under the leadership of this man, and who have been accused of harbouring all kinds of sinister ambitions and greedy desires to pull him down—if we join with this howling pack, would that be a noble spectacle before the nations?"[1]

Brave words, bravely spoken by an emotional young man of thirty-five, but, alas! soon to be recanted by that same young man. Five days after the decision made in Leinster Hall Mr. Gladstone dropped a bomb in the midst of that group of resolute Gaels, and the first man to be blown out of his resolution was the Mr. Healy who had said it would be foolish and criminal to surrender their chief, and had asked his audience what sort of a spectacle they would show the world if at the first blast of opposition they joined the howling pack which clamoured for him to be thrown to them.

There was not at this time in Ireland any demand for

[1] Quoted by Mr. Barry O'Brien in the *Life of Parnell*, vol. ii., p. 244.

Parnell's deposition from his authority. There was, on the contrary, a demand that he should be kept in it. The divorce suit had undoubtedly shocked the Irish people, though, perhaps, not so much as sentimentalists imagine. Much nauseous nonsense has been talked about the innate purity of the Irish people, who are no purer than any other of God's creatures. Both of Parnell's immediate predecessors in the leadership of the Nationalists—Daniel O'Connell and Isaac Butt—were men of notoriously loose lives. Butt had several bastards, one of whom caused him some embarrassment by filial enquiries at an election meeting. Nor were all of Parnell's colleagues as chaste as Michael Davitt. Biggar, as we have already noted, was the father of illegitimate children by different mothers. Neither continence nor fidelity are among the most notable characteristics of politicians, and it cannot be said that Parnell's colleagues were unduly chaste. They were, perhaps, more skilful than Biggar in concealing their promiscuity from the public notice, but many of them were undoubtedly polygamous in their habits. One of Mr. T. M. Healy's most devoted supporters among the Seceders, a man who grossly and persistently insulted Parnell during the debates about to be described in Committee Room 15, was a Rabelaisian gentleman whose business caused him to travel over a certain railway track in his own part of Ireland. It was commonly known among his colleagues that he frequently slept with each one of five barmaids in five separate towns in the course of his business travels. By comparison with his predecessors in the leadership and some of his colleagues, Parnell was a chaste man.

Nevertheless, we may agree that the divorce suit shocked the Irish people in the way in which the exposure of any eminent man shocks any people. The priests could not be expected to be otherwise than grieved by it. Davitt, austerely

chaste himself and demanding an austere chastity in others, ranged himself against Parnell from the beginning, and cannot be charged with treachery or inconsistency. He demanded his leader's deposal in the *Labour World* in terms which contained no equivocation. But there was no general, or even extensive, demand that the chief should be overthrown. Dr. Nulty, the Bishop of Meath, informed Mr. Healy three days after the hearing of the suit that Parnell's political leadership and position must be upheld. The most that was suggested by anyone was that he might temporarily retire. This was the suggestion made by Davitt. "He is urged," he wrote in the *Labour World*, "by the highest considerations that could appeal to a leader to efface himself for a brief period from public life until the time which the law requires to elapse before a divorced woman can marry enables him to come back, having paid the penalty which the public sentiment rightly inflicts for such transgression as his." We may make a special note of Davitt's recognition of a divorced woman's right to marry her lover in view of the fact that the *Freeman's Journal*, which began by supporting Parnell, deserted him because he had offended against the doctrines of Catholicism by marrying Mrs. O'Shea.

Dr. Walsh, the Archbishop of Dublin, suggested that Parnell might temporarily retire, not on moral grounds, but on grounds of expediency. At five great county conventions, where the attendance included more than a hundred priests, resolutions in favour of Parnell's continued leadership were passed. It was not, then, in Ireland that the revolt against his authority began. It was in the conventicles of Nonconformity and, later, in the ranks of the Irish Home Rulers in England. These last had been the first to choose him for their captain: they were now the first to throw him over.

Many Liberals maintained that Parnell must continue at his post, and Mr. Gladstone seems at first to have shared

their opinion. But the Dissenters were stirring themselves against him. The Rev. Hugh Price Hughes roared like a demented fishwife on the platform of St. James's Hall and through the columns of the *Methodist Times*. Mr. E. T. Cook—unexpectedly encountered in this crew—opposed himself in the *Pall Mall Gazette* to the continuation of Parnell's chieftaincy. Mr. W. T. Stead, a popular sensationalist, who reduced decency to a newspaper stunt, and thereby made it an offence to decent people, could not content himself with the pages of the *Review of Reviews*, but had to overflow into a pamphlet entitled *The Discrowned King of Ireland*, in which a sort of sanctimonious scurrility burst into spate. The favourite argument of the Rev. Hugh Price Hughes and Mr. W. T. Stead was that a man who had committed adultery could not be trusted to be honest or honourable in any other department of life. They seemed not to have realised that they were condemning as destitute of honour or honesty the majority of those who had ruled England for centuries.

While, then, the Irish in Ireland were consolidating themselves behind their leader, the Irish in England were preparing to fall in behind the Nonconformists. At a meeting of the National Liberal Federation, which was held in Sheffield on November 21, 1890, Mr. Morley and Sir William Harcourt were informed that the Nonconformists would insist upon Parnell's resignation. Mr. Gladstone amazingly submitted to this impertinence. He returned to London on November 24, and sent for Mr. Justin McCarthy. He said that Mr. Parnell had offered to consult him about his position after the Phœnix Park murders. Did he think that Mr. Parnell would consent to consult him again? He was afraid that the Liberals might lose the General Election if Mr. Parnell remained leader of the Irish party! . . . Mr. McCarthy did not know what Mr. Parnell would be willing to do. That was on Monday. On the previous day, during

one of his religious orgies, the Rev. Hugh Price Hughes announced to an audience of thrilled Methodists that he had "high authority for saying that Mr. Gladstone" would "intervene, and" that "Mr. Parnell" would "recognise his voice as one to be obeyed." That was a way to treat a great and proud man, to let a Welsh mob-orator use him as a titbit for replete Methodists during a Pleasant Sunday Afternoon! To depose Parnell after that was an infamy.

III

Mr. Gladstone, immediately after Mr. McCarthy's departure, wrote to Mr. Morley a letter containing the following passages:

". . . While clinging to the hope of communication from Mr. Parnell, to whomsoever addressed, I thought it necessary, viewing the arrangements for the commencement of the session to-morrow, to acquaint Mr. McCarthy with the conclusion at which, after using all the means of observation and reflection in my power, I had myself arrived. It was that, notwithstanding the splendid services rendered by Mr. Parnell to his country, his continuance at the present moment in the leadership would be productive of consequences disastrous in the highest degree to the cause of Ireland. I think I may be warranted in asking you so far to expand the conclusion I have given above as to add that the continuance I speak of would not only place many hearty and effective friends of the Irish cause in a position of great embarrassment, but would render my retention of the leadership of the Liberal party, based as it has been mainly upon the presentation of the Irish cause, almost a nullity."

The rest of the letter, which is fully cited in Mr. Morley's *Life of Gladstone* (bk. x., chap. v., sect. 4), deals with Mr. Gladstone's suggestion to Mr. McCarthy that his views were "not intended for his colleagues generally, if he found

that Mr. Parnell contemplated spontaneous action." They were to be communicated to the Irish party only "if he should find that Mr. Parnell had not in contemplation any step of the nature indicated." Why Mr. McCarthy did not inform his colleagues of Mr. Gladstone's views will never be known. But Mr. Gladstone was not leaving anything to chance or Mr. McCarthy. He sent his letter to Mr. Morley, who tried, but unsuccessfully, to find Mr. Parnell before the Irish party meeting began at a quarter to one o'clock on Tuesday afternoon, November 25, 1890, in Committee Room 15. Mr. Morley has given an account[1] of the next few hours, fraught with so much consequence to England and Ireland. "Mr. Parnell kept himself invisible and inaccessible alike to English and Irish friends until a few minutes before the meeting. The Irish member [Mr. McCarthy] who had seen Mr. Gladstone the previous evening at the last moment was able to deliver the message that had been confided to him. Mr. Parnell replied that he should stand to his guns. The other members of the Irish party came together, and, wholly ignorant of the attitude taken by Mr. Gladstone, promptly and with hardly a word of discussion re-elected their leader to his usual post. The gravity of the unfortunate error committed in the failure to communicate the private message to the whole of the Nationalist members, with or without Mr. Parnell's leave, lay in the fact that it magnified and distorted Mr. Gladstone's later intervention into a humiliating public ultimatum."

Parnell entered Committee Room 15 looking "as if we had committed adultery with his wife," and was loudly cheered by his followers. "Much hand-shaking and many assurances of continued allegiance preceded the business of the day," which was the election of a sessional chairman, the constitutional title of the leader of the Irish party, who was

[1] *Life of Gladstone*, by John Morley, bk. x., chap. v., sect. 4.

always elected at the beginning of each session. Mr. Sexton proposed, and Colonel Nolan seconded, the re-election of Parnell, which was unanimously agreed to, and Parnell thanked his followers for the renewal of their faith in him and said he would continue to be their captain. As the party dispersed, Sir William Harcourt met Mr. Pierce Mahony and said: "You have done a nice thing. You have re-elected Parnell after Mr. Gladstone's letter." This was the first announcement that any member of the Irish party, except Mr. Justin McCarthy, received of the existence of such a letter.

Mr. Morley arrived at the House of Commons "a little after three," and saw Mr. Parnell in the lobby talking to a group of his friends. "He came forward with much cordiality. 'I am very sorry,' he said, 'that I could not make an appointment, but the truth is I did not get your message until I came down to the House, and then it was too late.'" They went along to Mr. Gladstone's room, and as they went Mr. Parnell casually informed Mr. Morley that he had been re-elected to the leadership of the Irish party. Mr. Morley, when they were in Mr. Gladstone's room, then read Mr. Gladstone's letter to him. "As he listened, I knew the look on his face quite well enough to see that he was obdurate. The conversation did not last long. He said the feeling against him was a storm in a teacup, and would soon pass. I replied that he might know Ireland, but he did not half know England; that it was much more than a storm in a teacup; that if he set British feeling at defiance and brazened it out, it would be ruin to Home Rule at the election. . . . His manner throughout was perfectly cool and quiet, and his unresonant voice was unshaken. He was paler than usual, and now and then a wintry smile passed over his face. . . . 'Of course,' he said, as I held the door open for him to leave, 'Mr. Gladstone will have to attack

me. I shall expect that. He will have a right to do that. So we parted."

A few minutes later Mr. Gladstone entered the room, where Mr. Morley was waiting to tell him the news. "'Well?' he asked eagerly the moment the door was closed, and without taking off cape or hat. 'Have you seen him?' 'He is obdurate,' said I. I told him shortly what had passed. He stood at the table, dumb for some instants, looking at me as if he could not believe what I had said. Then he burst out that we must at once publish his letter to me; at once, that very afternoon. I said, 'Tis too late now.' 'Oh no,' said he; 'the *Pall Mall* will bring it out in a special edition.' 'Well, but,' I persisted, 'we ought really to consider it a little.' Reluctantly he yielded, and we went into the House. Harcourt joined us on the bench, and we told him the news. It was by and by decided that the letter should be immediately published. Mr. Gladstone thought that I should at once inform Mr. Parnell of this. There he was at that moment, pleasant and smiling, in his usual place on the Irish bench. I went into our lobby, and sent somebody to bring him out. Out he came, and we took three or four turns in the lobby. I told him that it was thought right, under the new circumstances, to send the letter to the press. 'Yes,' he said amicably, as if it were no particular concern of his, 'I think Mr. Gladstone will be quite right to do that: it will put him straight with his party.'"

That passage has been cited at that length not only because it is a vivid account of a transaction by one of the parties to it, but because it clearly shows that Mr. Gladstone was responsible for the publication in the press of his letter.

It was immediately after the colloquy on the Front Bench between Mr. Gladstone, Mr. Morley, and Sir William Harcourt that the last named met Mr. Pierce Mahony and made

the remark quoted on a previous page. The effect of this revelation on the Nationalists was immediate and devastating. Most of them were young men. They had fought together in times of ignominy and persecution for a purpose which seemed now to be on the point of being won, and suddenly, through what must have seemed to some of them a piece of folly, they were in danger of humiliating defeat. It is part of the pitiful history of this period that a situation in which cool wits and complete dispassion and long thought were demanded should have been dealt with in haste and heat. If Mr. McCarthy had told all or some of his colleagues of what he knew of Mr. Gladstone's opinions; if Mr. Gladstone had held back his letter from the press for another twenty-four hours; if Mr. Parnell had had one friend in his own party in whom he could confide, not as a leader to a follower, but as one human being to another; if there had been a member of the party with some power of decision equal to Parnell's; if the Ulster Presbyterian who had taught Parnell how to obstruct and had been his devoted, but discriminating, follower from the beginning of his Parliamentary career—if Biggar had not died on February 19, 1890, nine months before these events occurred, but had lived long enough to speak his mind to his chief as freely as he had spoken it in Galway town—how different might be the story we are now recording. Biggar had never shown signs of fear before Parnell. That rough, ungainly, ugly-looking Ulster-man was, perhaps, the only man in the Irish party for whom Parnell had a feeling of affection. He was the only one among them who could go to his chief and talk to him on level terms and not be repulsed, for Parnell knew that underneath that misshapen hulk there beat a heart full of love for him. It was Biggar who, when there was campaigning to be done in Ireland, watched over him as tenderly as a woman watches over her baby, and would order him to bed when he seemed

to be overtaxing his strength. But there was no Biggar to stand by Parnell when Parnell most needed him.

The news of Mr. Gladstone's letter soon spread through the House of Commons. The Nationalists, deeply dismayed, wanted to hold another meeting at once, but Parnell, now in a mood of depression, though not of irresolution, sat alone in the smoking-room of the Commons, glooming heavily on any who approached him. Mr. Pierce Mahony and some of his friends wrote to Parnell, saying that they thought it would be better if he were to retire for a time, but stating that they would abide by any decision he made. Mr. Gladstone's letter had now been published in the press, and its immediate effect was to rouse resentment against him among Irishmen. This was an ultimatum and an attempt to dictate who should be the leader of the Irish party! . . . Parnell met Mr. Mahony and his friends at the Westminster Palace Hotel in the company of Mr. Justin McCarthy, and told them that if Mr. Gladstone would state in writing that he would give the Irish Parliament control of the police and of the land he would retire. But nothing came of the suggestion, nor can Parnell seriously have expected anything to come of it.

On November 26, 1890, the party met again. "Parnell entered, and went straight to the chair, looking calm, unconcerned, imperious." A member, named John Barry, immediately rose and suggested that Mr. Parnell should retire from the leadership. Another, Dr. Commins, agreed with this suggestion in the interests of expediency. Mr. McCarthy thought the whole situation should be reconsidered. So did Mr. Sexton. Mr. Lane and Mr. Sheehy thought that Mr. Parnell ought to retire. They begged him to remember the interests of the tenants on the Smith-Barry and Ponsonby estates, which were then in peril. "Colonel Nolan urged Parnell to stand to his guns and to tolerate the dictation of no English party leader."

When they had said all that they had to say, Parnell, who had not spoken one word, rose and left the room. The meeting had been adjourned until December 1. He went down to his house at 10, Walsingham Terrace, Brighton, where he and Mrs. O'Shea were now living. "I would not let him speak till he had changed his cold boots and socks; then he came over to me and took me into his arms, saying, 'I think we shall have to fight, Queenie. Can you bear it? I'm afraid it is going to be tough work.' I said, 'Yes, if you can.' But I must confess that when I looked at the frail figure and white face that was so painfully delicate, whose only vitality seemed to lie in the deep, burning eyes, my heart misgave me, for I very much doubted if his health would stand any prolonged strain."[1]

That night he wrote his famous manifesto.

He was now very ill, although, like many men of highly-nervous temperament, he had the will-power to appear well in public. It was only at home that his weakness was revealed. "November was always a bad month for his health, and the cold and damp gave him rheumatism. His left arm pained him almost continuously all this winter. . . ."[2]

IV

It is necessary here to break the narrative so that the reader may realise Mr. Gladstone's feelings at this time. Mr. Morley quotes a memorandum which he found among the old statesman's papers after his death: "Since the month of December, 1885, my whole political life had been governed by a supreme regard to the Irish question. For every day, I may say, of these five years we have been engaged in laboriously rolling up-hill the stone of Sisyphus. Mr. Parnell's decision of yesterday means that the stone is to

[1] *Charles Stewart Parnell*, by Katharine O'Shea, vol. ii., p. 161.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 163.

break away from us and roll down again to the bottom of the hill. I cannot recall the years which have elapsed. It was daring, perhaps, to begin at the age I had then attained a process which it was obvious must be a prolonged one."[1] It is a pardonable complaint in an old man of eighty-one, who sees his labours endangered by an impetuous young man of forty-four.

V

On Friday night, November 28, 1890, Parnell called a meeting of the following members of his party at the house of Dr. Fitzgerald, in Chester Place: John and William Redmond, J. J. O'Kelly, E. Leamy, Colonel Nolan, and Justin McCarthy. He read his manifesto to them. It was a long and vigorous and adroitly-written document, but its publication has been judged to have been as unwise as the precipitate publication of Mr. Gladstone's letter to Mr. Morley. It was addressed " To the People of Ireland," and it began with the assertion that, as " the integrity and independence of a section of the Irish Parliamentary party has been sapped and destroyed by the wire-pullers of the English Liberal party, it has become necessary for me to take counsel with you, and, having given you the knowledge which is in my possession, to ask your judgment upon a matter which now solely devolves upon you to decide. The letter of Mr. Gladstone to Mr. Morley, written for the purpose of influencing the decision of the Irish party in the choice of their leader, and claiming for the Liberal party and their leaders the right of veto upon that choice, is the immediate cause of this address to you, to remind you and your Parliamentary representatives that Ireland considers the independence of her party as her only safeguard within the constitution, and above and beyond all other considerations whatever. The threat in that letter,

[1] *Life of Gladstone*, by John Morley, bk. x., chap. v., sect. 4.

repeated so insolently on many English platforms and in numerous British newspapers, that unless Ireland concedes this right of veto to England she will indefinitely postpone the chance of obtaining Home Rule, compels me, while not for one moment admitting the slightest probability of such loss, to put before you information which until now, so far as my colleagues are concerned, has been solely in my possession, and which will enable you to understand the measure of the loss with which you are threatened unless you consent to throw me to the English wolves now howling for my destruction. . . ."

He goes on to state that Mr. Gladstone had told him that his proposals for Home Rule included the reduction of the number of Irish members in the Imperial Parliament from 103 to 32, the withdrawal of land questions from the jurisdiction of the Irish legislature, and the retention by the Imperial Parliament of control over the Irish constabulary for an indefinite period, though Ireland would have to pay for them. Mr. Morley, he asserted, had endeavoured, only a few days before the publication of the manifesto, to make this truncated form of self-government palatable to the Irish members by offering some of them office in the Government. Parnell himself was to be made Chief Secretary.

He follows his account "of Mr. Gladstone's views and those of his colleagues during two hours' conversation at Hawarden, a conversation which," he adds with a snap at Mr. Gladstone's notorious garrulity, "I am bound to admit, was mainly monopolised by Mr. Gladstone," with a statement of his own views on the subject. He concludes with this passage: "Sixteen years ago I conceived the idea of an Irish Parliamentary party independent of all English parties. Ten years ago I was elected the leader of an independent Irish Parliamentary party. During these years that party has remained independent, and because of its inde-

pendence it has forced upon the English people the necessity of granting Home Rule to Ireland. I believe that party will obtain Home Rule only provided it remains independent of any English party. I do not believe that any action of the Irish people in supporting me will endanger the Home Rule cause or postpone the establishment of an Irish Parliament; but even if the danger with which we are threatened by the Liberal party of to-day were realised, I believe that the Irish people throughout the world would agree with me that the postponement would be preferable to a compromise of our national rights by the acceptance of a measure which would not realise the aspirations of our race."[1]

When he had read the manifesto there was a short silence. Then Mr. Justin McCarthy, in a quavering voice, said that he disapproved of every word in it. Parnell pressed him to specify an objectionable passage, and Mr. McCarthy repeated that he objected to the whole manifesto.

"Point out what you consider offensive," Parnell insisted.

"Well, 'English wolves'! . . ." McCarthy began.

"I will not change them," interrupted Parnell. "Whatever goes out, they will remain."

There was no more to be said, and at midnight the party separated. The next morning the manifesto appeared in the press, and the cleavage in the party was complete.

VI

Men, even those who were his friends, said that the publication of the manifesto was a mistake, and no doubt in the heat of that time it seemed to be a colossal error; but we are far enough from the year 1890 to be able to question whether its issue was the mistake it was proclaimed. Would

[1] Mr. Gladstone's comment on the manifesto was that the discussion at Hawarden was merely the preliminary "feeler" of ordinary political negotiations.

its issue have been a mistake if the Irish party had remained unified in support of their leader? The Seceder may reply: "But we were not then unified, therefore its issue *was* a mistake." But *why* were they not unified? Was their duty to Mr. Gladstone or to Mr. Parnell? Was their duty to the Irish party or to the Liberal party? Was the Home Rule Bill which Mr. Gladstone had introduced into the House of Commons in 1886 a measure so satisfactory to the Irish that they were entitled to abandon their leader for the hope that Mr. Gladstone might again be able to bring a Home Rule Bill before Parliament? We must not condemn these young men too easily. They were suddenly confronted with a problem which might daunt the doughtiest and most experienced of politicians. Parnell had not been so assiduous in his leadership for several years before this time as they had the right to expect him to be. They had come out of great tribulation to a prospect of peace, and were now in danger of being returned to their tribulation. The behaviour of Parnell must have seemed to some of them then as if Moses, having been denied the privilege of entering the Promised Land, had forbidden his followers to enter it. All the allowances that can be made for the Seceders—and they are substantial allowances—seem to the present writer to be insufficient to justify their secession. They threw up their hands at once and yielded to panic. None of them stopped to consider the situation with cool wits: all of them allowed their fears and passions to govern their decisions.

It did not occur to them to wonder whether Mr. Gladstone would permit the Rev. Hugh Price Hughes and his gang of ravening Methodists to prevent him from establishing his will. They did not examine the ultimatum as carefully as they ought to have done to see whether Mr. Gladstone had left himself a way of escape from a difficult position if the Irish party should decline to desert their leader. Mr. Gladstone

had forced Home Rule upon the Liberal party, when to do so inevitably meant the division of his forces and the loss of his ablest lieutenants. He had allowed Mr. Chamberlain to leave him rather than abandon his Bill. He had allowed Lord Hartington and Mr. Goschen and Mr. Trevelyan to go over to the enemy rather than scrap Home Rule. Was it likely that this unquenchable old man would permit Mr. W. T. Stead and the Rev. Hugh Price Hughes to reduce him to shivering submission when neither Mr. Chamberlain nor the Marquis of Hartington could do so? Parnell had every right to believe that if his party would remain united under him Mr. Gladstone would discover that his retention of the leadership of the Liberal party need not be rendered almost a nullity. For Mr. Gladstone to make such a discovery was tantamount to an announcement that his followers would come to heel. Would Mr. Morley have deserted him because Parnell refused to go into a white sheet? Would Sir William Harcourt, with his eyes on the succession, have abandoned him? There is warranty for the belief that a display of unity and courage at that moment by the Irish party would have impressed the generous imagination of the English people. Parnell, than whom no man at that time, not even Mr. Gladstone himself, had a sounder instinct for strategical facts, surveyed the scene and saw that the ranks must be closed and the field taken with resolution and audacity, or else surrendered.

We have to remember that in throwing him to "the English wolves"—a pardonable platform phrase which need not seriously have wounded any susceptibilities—the Seceders gained nothing but bitterness for themselves and those who had formerly been their comrades. They could not foresee this, but at least they might have considered its possibility. Some of them, almost with tears in their eyes, complained that Parnell had called Mr. Gladstone "the grand old spider"

and " the grand old sophist." These were harmless epithets, such as politicians constantly hurl at each other, and although Mr. Gladstone could hardly be expected to like being called either a spider or a sophist, yet he was not a man of mean mind, likely to harbour little resentments or to let his judgment be deflected by platform abuse. He had himself declared that Parnell was " marching through rapine to the disintegration and dismemberment of the empire "—a fairly comprehensive crime—and had put him in prison for seven months, but neither the accusation nor the punishment prevented them from meeting at Hawarden eight years later on terms of agreement and friendship. One is not minimising the difficulties of that bewildered group of suddenly-disheartened men or being easily wise after the event when one asserts that their minds should have been concentrated, not on the facts of Mr. Gladstone's situation, but on the facts of Mr. Parnell's.

The supreme thought for every Irish mind at the moment should have been to preserve the unity of the party. That unity was made by Parnell, and could not be preserved without him. It was not preserved without him. On the day after his death, amidst the lamentation, one heard from this one and from that one the assertion that now it would be possible to reassemble the party. But the division made in Committee Room 15 was unity compared with the division after Parnell had died. Then there were only Parnellites and anti-Parnellites, but now there were Redmondites and Dillonites and Healyites and Davittites and O'Brienites and Sextonites and McCarthyites and Heaven only knows what other *ites*. Some say that the Celtic Irish cannot cohere, that their liability to emotional crises and fits of panic will for ever prevent them from the measure and the stature of a united nation, but those who say this do not remember that the Celts have always served well under a chief, especially

when he was not of their blood. Parnell was such a chief. That was the supreme fact about him for his followers to consider. Whether he had sinned or not, he was their lord, and their duty was to obey him. And because they did not obey him, but were divided against him, they were confounded and destroyed. It is sometimes said that the Irish people deserted Parnell, but the charge is unfounded. Some of his Parliamentary followers deserted him—most of them, undoubtedly, for honest reasons—and the dignitaries of the Church, who never loved him, were making ready to destroy him—as, perhaps, with their peculiar, though sometimes stretchable, opinions they were entitled to do—but the Irish people themselves, knowing their need for a dictator, remained devoted to his service and his memory. " When I was leaving my hotel in New York," says Mr. Harrington, " on my way home to join Parnell at Kilkenny, the servants —almost all Irish boys and girls—gathered in the hall, or on the stairs, or in the passages, and as I came away all cried out, in voices broken with emotion: ' Mr. Harrington, don't desert him,' ' Don't give him up.' " There were louts here and there, incited to it by some unkindly and offensive priests, who could bring themselves to insult him, but the mass of the people were, and remained, his faithful friends.

VII

On Monday, December 1, 1890, the Irish party met in Committee Room 15 to begin that bitter fight which ruined them. A Mr. Abraham, who subsequently became an implacable antagonist of his chief, moved " that Mr. Parnell's tenure of the chairmanship of this party is hereby terminated." The resolution was immediately ruled out of order on the ground that the motion under consideration at the time of adjournment on November 26 was " that a full meeting of

the party be held on Friday to give Mr. Parnell an opportunity to reconsider his position." Colonel Nolan, trying to gain time for thought, then moved that " the party should meet in Dublin and settle the question there." Parnell supported this proposal in order that the party should be removed from English, and brought under Irish, influences; but it was defeated. The meetings, which continued until December 6, were full of anger and emotion. Mr. Healy was now the protagonist against Parnell. He was nine years younger than his chief, and had offered him service and devotion which were accepted or rejected without signs of affection. When Mr. Healy's name was put on the list of counsel who were to defend Parnell against *The Times*, Parnell struck it out: an unaccountable, and almost unforgivable, wound to a young man's pride.

We shall find occasion to condemn many things done at this time by Mr. Healy, but the reader will do well to remember that this brilliant and sensitive man received extraordinary and unwarranted provocation which a man of his age, proud and passionate and swift in resentment, could not be expected to endure. It is conceivable that some solution of the problem set before the Irish members in Committee Room 15 might have been found had Mr. Healy had more control over his tongue: it is certain that such a solution might have been found if Parnell could have looked upon his lieutenant with a kindlier eye. The reports of the proceedings in that room amazed and disgusted outsiders, some of whom raised their hands to heaven and thanked God that they were not as *that* lot were; but it is impossible for any unsanctimonious man to read them now and not feel moved by the tragic debates. Some of the speeches made during the discussions were of great quality. Some of them were appalling in their meanness. Mr. Barry and Mr. Abraham, to whom reference has already been made, were conspicuous

among those whose speeches and behaviour were mean. There was an angry person, called Dr. Tanner, described by Parnell as " a gutter sparrow," who kept on asserting on the slightest provocation that he had been insulted. They made little, niggling interruptions, none of them of importance, but all of them irritating and capable of setting fire to inflammable minds. Mr. Clancy, in a fine speech, reminded his auditors that a nation's cause was at stake. Mr. Parnell interjected, " Two nations," whereupon the ineffable Tanner shouted, " One man." Amidst such interruptions as these the meetings proceeded.

Mr. Clancy—this was on Wednesday, December 3, 1890—proposed the following resolution:

" That in view of the difference of opinion that has arisen between Mr. Gladstone and Mr. Parnell as to the accuracy of Mr. Parnell's recollection of the suggestions offered at Hawarden in reference to suggested changes in, and departures from, the Home Rule Bill of 1886 on the subject of the control of the constabulary and the settlement of the land question, the Whips of the party be instructed to obtain from Mr. Gladstone, Mr. John Morley, and Sir William Harcourt for the information of the party, before any further consideration of the question, what their views are with regard to these two vital points."

Mr. Sexton wanted to know what was behind this motion, and Mr. John Redmond informed him that if the replies given to the Whips by Mr. Gladstone and his colleagues were satisfactory, then Mr. Parnell would retire from the chairmanship of the party. Mr. Healy speared for a moment or two. Who was to decide whether the replies were satisfactory or unsatisfactory: the party or Mr. Parnell? But it was decided that there should be no further discussion on the matter until Mr. Parnell, who had left the room, should return. Hope arose in those tormented hearts. It might

now be that their troubles would be solved. Mr. Parnell entered the room, and Mr. Sexton acquainted him with what had happened. He said that neither he nor those who took his view of the situation had had time to think over the proposal made by Mr. Clancy, and he suggested that the debate should be adjourned until the following day at twelve o'clock. This was agreed to, and as the party rose to leave the room, Mr. Healy, recovering some of his devotion to his chief, rose and said, while tears stood in his eyes: " I wish to make a personal declaration in your regard, Mr. Parnell. I wish to say that if you feel able to meet the party on these points, my voice will be the first, on the very earliest moment possible, consonant with the liberties of my country, to call you back to your proper place as the leader of the Irish race." There was loud and prolonged applause, which was renewed after Mr. Sexton had said: " I wish also to say that I never for a moment abandoned the hope that, no matter what might happen now, a day would come when you would be leader of the Irish nation in a legislature where none but Irish opinion would influence your position."

Mr. Parnell did not reply.

VIII

On the following day, Thursday, December 4, the party reassembled at twelve o'clock. Parnell immediately dealt with the question of his retirement if the replies made by Mr. Gladstone to the enquiries of the Irish Whips were satisfactory. He began by stating that " my responsibility is derived from you to some extent, to a large extent, but it is also derived from a long train of circumstances and events in which many of you, and I speak to you with great respect, have had no share. My position has been granted to me, not because I am the mere leader of a Parliamentary party,

but because I am the leader of the Irish nation. It has been granted to me on account of the services which I have rendered in building up this party, in conciliating prejudices, in soothing differences of opinion, and in keeping together the discordant elements of our race within the bounds of moderation all over the world; and you, gentlemen, know and I know that there is no man living, if I am gone, who could succeed in reconciling the feelings of the Irish people to the provisions of the Hawarden proposals. I have explained to you why I cannot surrender my responsibility in this matter. But I will go on to say further that, since you ask me to declare beforehand my views upon these important questions, since you ask me to surrender to you beforehand my judgment upon these matters, I claim that this party, in the face of their constituencies, should by solemn resolution announce what their judgment is. While not apprehending, as I said yesterday, any differences of opinion, while believing as I do that I shall be found certainly not in advance of the sentiments of the party upon these matters, I claim that you, since you wish to take from me the responsibility which to-day is mine, and which can only be surrendered by my act, should state for the information of your constituents and for my information what your definite judgment is with regard to the two important questions of the control of the constabulary and the land question. Now, gentlemen, in order to facilitate your coming to a conclusion, I have drafted a resolution, which, if you wish and think proper, I will move:

" ' That in the opinion of the Irish Parliamentary party no Home Rule Bill will be satisfactory or acceptable to the Irish people which will not confer the immediate control of the Irish police on the executive responsible to the Irish Parliament; and, secondly, which does not confer upon the Irish Parliament full power to deal with the land question.' "

Then followed this famous passage:

" Gentlemen, it is for you to act in this matter. You are dealing with a man who is an unrivalled sophist."

Barry interrupts. " Which ?" says he. " The Grand Old Man," Mr. Parnell replies. " I don't believe it," Barry fatuously exclaims. Then Mr. Parnell goes on, indifferent to what Barry believes or disbelieves:

" You are dealing with a man with whom and to whom it is as impossible to give a direct answer to a plain and simple question as it is for me impossible to give an indirect answer to a plain and simple question. You are dealing with a man who is capable of saying to you and of appealing to the constituencies for a majority which will make him independent of both the Irish party and the Tory party at the next General Election. And if I surrender to him, if I give up my position to him, if you throw me to him, I say, gentlemen, that it is your bounden duty to see that you secure value for the sacrifice ! . . ."

One does not need to be practised in the technique of public oratory to realise that this speech, though it is full of unconcluded sentences, had a terrific effect on those who listened to it. It was not delivered to a silent assembly. It was frequently interrupted by cheers and by murmurs of dissent. It inflamed Mr. Healy, who, on the previous evening, had been dissolved in tears, and in a few moments the hope that had risen unsteadily in the hearts of the party was knocked down. For a considerable while the meeting became a wrangle between Mr. Healy and Mr. Parnell, with other members making interjections, generally of an irrelevant and unhelpful character. Mr. Parnell ended a short speech with the statement that he had made an answer to a question, " and upon that answer I will stand or fall before the country." " Then you will fall, Mr. Parnell," Mr. Healy angrily shouted,

adding, " and now that both sides have made up their minds, what is the use of further debate?" There were cheers and interruption at this point. Mr. Clancy, who had tried to make " a golden bridge," cried out: " Away with him! Away with him!" and Mr. John O'Connor completed the cry with, " Crucify him!" This exclamation appalled the Seceders, who begged Mr. Parnell to prevent his followers from uttering blasphemy. Mr. O'Connor tried to explain, but Mr. Healy brushed him aside and, almost shaking his fist at Mr. Parnell, declared that he and his friends would talk no more. " We shall sit here, or a sufficient number of us shall sit here, and when you have your speeches delivered, we will return and we will vote your deposition, be it to-day or to-morrow, or Saturday, or Sunday—aye, the better the day the better the deed! . . ."

" Not Sunday," interrupted Colonel Nolan. " I won't sit on Sunday."

A gust of laughter momentarily cooled the combatants, but Mr. Healy was not to be cooled. " Colonel Nolan will probably bring out his cavalry and artillery to the hills now. Now that a speech appealing to what a certain gentleman known to us all, called in the Special Commission Court the hillside man, has been delivered, our position is plain."

Mr. Parnell: Hear, hear.

Mr. Healy: Your position is plain.

Mr. Parnell: Hear, hear.

Mr. Healy: It is unmistakable. Let us come, then, to the issue. You declare the country is for you. Go to it. Go to it.

Mr. Parnell: So we will.

Then followed a furious and lengthy scene, in which Mr. Parnell and Mr. Healy caught at each other's words like gladiators catching at each other's throats. There came a moment when the Celtic emotionalism of Mr. Healy robbed him of all control of his tongue, and suddenly he uttered

one blasting and unforgivable sentence. He quoted a passage from a speech by Mr. Parnell, who had spoken of an alliance between the Liberals and the Nationalists, " an alliance which I venture to believe will last," and like a prosecuting counsel he snapped out, " What broke it off ?"

Three voices—Mr. Parnell's, Colonel Nolan's, and Dr. Fitzgerald's—answered: " Gladstone's letter."

But Mr. Healy had another answer. " It perished in the stench of the divorce court," he declared, amid loud cheers from his supporters.

Now, indeed, the golden bridge was down, and the weeping Healy of the night before was the blinding, blasting vengeance of to-day. He worked himself up to a peroration which had nobility in it, though it was the nobility of unreasoning rage. " We will go into the fight armed, as we believe, by every feeling of patriotism. We will go into it, founding ourselves, not upon the opinion of an individual, but upon the opinion of the elected representatives of the Irish race, chosen and selected by the sovereign authority—by the Irish people, guided, sir, under your guidance. We will go into it, putting forward the claim that in this matter we are on the side of prudence, of justice, and of right; and whatever be the insults hurled at me by any section of my countrymen, whatever taunts may be addressed to me in the course of this feud, I will endure them as we have endured ten years of slavery in this House, ten years of labour, ten years of self-suppression, ten years of sacrifice. We will go to our people and we will tell them what are the real issues in this matter, for though hitherto some of them have been covered up and enclosed, we shall not shirk, and I shall not shirk, stating them broadly and openly to the people, and with the people be the verdict. If you, sir, should go down, you are only one man gone. Heads of greater leaders have been stricken on the block before now for Ireland."

" Not by their own friends, not by their own allies," Colonel Nolan interrupted.

" And the Irish cause remains," continued Mr. Healy, ignoring the interruption. " The Irish people can put us down, but the Irish cause will remain always. For the future I have no fear. Instead of being distressed, I am confident and buoyant; instead of wishing myself dead, as I have heard some men do, I am glad to be alive for Ireland. I am glad in this hour of her sorrowful destiny to be able to stand for her, and stand with her we shall, be the issue what it may."

It was all over then. There were more speeches to be made, more anger and passion to be displayed, more insults to be endured, but in effect the end had come. The Irish party had committed suicide. Hell had no fury like Tim Healy scorned, and in a burst of hysteria he handed the cup of poison to his party, and his party drained it to the dregs. Mr. Redmond followed him now, but did not attempt to build up the golden bridge again: it would have been useless to have tried. He said, in the course of an able speech, " it was said that in every other change of leadership the existing leader was driven out in order to put in his place a man whom the sentiments of the people pointed out as a better man." He swung round to Mr. Parnell. " Who is the man to take your place? Who is the man who, when the Home Rule Bill comes to be settled, can discuss its provisions on an equal footing with the leaders of the English parties? There is no such man."

Mr. Healy: Suppose Mr. Parnell died?

Mr. Parnell: I don't intend to die.

After Mr. Redmond came Mr. Sexton, and then a calm period when a deputation to Mr. Gladstone was appointed, in accordance with the resolution which Mr. Parnell had moved. Mr. Sexton, Mr. John Redmond, Mr. T. M. Healy, Mr. Edmund Leamy, and the Irish Whips were sent to interview

the author of the rejected Home Rule Bill on the subject of its successor. Mr. Gladstone received them at 1, Carlton Gardens, and was too much for them. He listened to them " with icy politeness," and when they had finished, " frigidly read his reply." Their business, in which he did not propose to meddle, was to choose a leader. His views on Home Rule were known. When the time came for him to produce another Home Rule Bill they would be told all about it. They could be sure that he would not introduce a Bill which did not command their unanimous approval. He wished them a very good evening. . . .

IX

On Saturday, December 6, 1890, the party reassembled to receive the report of the delegates. There was an unedifying and singularly stupid argument about procedure, in the course of which tempers were violently lost, and any hope there might have been of sensible discussion was dissipated. The man Barry sedulously insulted Mr. Parnell whenever he got a chance, descending once to the gutter, when he called his leader " a dirty trickster." From now until the end of the meeting words were spoken which could only have been uttered by men drunk with rage. There had been an acrimonious argument about a point of order, at the end of which Mr. Parnell said that he was their chairman until he was deposed. Mr. Healy, dropping to the dreadful level of the man Barry, shouted out: " Allow me to depose you." Mr. John O'Connor endeavoured, amid pandemonium, to move a resolution calling the attention of the Irish people to the fact that Mr. Gladstone refused to enter into negotiations with their representatives or to state his views on the two vital points submitted for his consideration, except upon the condition that this party shall first remove Mr. Parnell

from the chairmanship. A remark was made about Mr. Gladstone in the turbulent discussion which ensued, and Mr. John Redmond exclaimed: "He is the master of the party." The members cheered and counter-cheered, and then, when silence fell, Mr. Healy leant forward and snarled: "Who is to be the mistress of the party?"

There was immediately an uproar. The poisoned tongue had shot out like a serpent's fang, and madness followed. Mr. A. O'Connor appealed to the chairman, but on what ground he was appealing no one knew. Parnell, who had been astonishingly restrained during the greater part of the proceedings, now showed feeling. He could endure any insult to himself, even from the man Barry, but he would not endure any insult to Mrs. O'Shea. "Better appeal to your own friend," he replied to Mr. A. O'Connor; "better appeal to that cowardly little scoundrel there, that in an assembly of Irishmen dares to insult a woman." Out of the cheers and counter-cheers came the plaintive voice of Mr. A. O'Connor declaring that he had only appealed to the chairman to try and make everybody behave like gentlemen. Mr. Parnell recovered himself, and endeavoured to go on with the ritual of resolutions, but Mr. Healy sneered at him, and for a moment or two his rage returned. "Mr. Healy," he said, "I will not stand very much more from you." He tried a second time to deal with the resolutions amid a confusion of voices. Then Mr. Justin McCarthy rose, and said he thought the time had now come to close the debate. No good could come from further discussion. At half-past five he left the room, followed by forty-four of his colleagues, leaving Parnell and twenty-six faithful followers in the candle-lit room—the remnants of the great band.

Mr. McCarthy immediately conducted his group of Seceders to the Conference Room of the House of Commons, and there a motion, moved by Mr. A. O'Connor and seconded by

Mr. J. F. X. O'Brien, was unanimously passed " that, acting under an imperative sense of duty to our country, we, the undersigned, being an absolute majority of the whole number of the Irish Parliamentary party, declare that Mr. Parnell's term of chairmanship of this party is hereby terminated." The O'Gorman Mahon, the hoary old ruffian who had introduced O'Shea into the Irish party, was not present at these proceedings, but he wrote to say that he, too, was a Seceder. The Sardonic Dramatist could not resist that comic touch. From his deathbed, the O'Gorman Mahon, bellicose before the grave, sent Parnell a challenge to a duel. Parnell wanly smiled, and put it aside. Sir Edward Clarke, commenting to Mr. David Plunket on these scenes, said, referring to the divorce suit: " I knew I was throwing a bomb into the Irish camp, but I did not know it would do so much mischief." " Ah," said he, " you didn't know that when it burst they would pick up the pieces, and cut each other's throats with them."

X

Mr. Healy had said in his speech that he would not shirk telling the Irish people, broadly and openly, the real issues in the matter. He kept his word, but it would have been better for him had he broken it. " If you, sir," he said to Parnell, " should go down, you are only one man gone." And that was true, but he did not say, as he should have said, that Parnell was the only man, that, when he went, no one was left.[1]

[1] The material for this chapter has been taken from the *Freeman's Journal*, December 5, 1890; the *Belfast Evening Telegraph*, December 8, 1890; and *United Ireland*, December 13, 1890.

CHAPTER XI
DEATH OF PARNELL

I

THERE happened to be at this time a vacancy in the constituency of North Kilkenny, and Sir John Pope Hennessy, who had been a Conservative—he was actually a member of the Carlton Club when he was elected for North Kilkenny—was the official Nationalist candidate. Parnell had sent a telegram to him, asking him on which side he was standing, Parnell's or the Seceders'; but had not received a reply to it. Sir John had learnt some of his tactics from Parnell himself, who had embarrassed many of his opponents by inducing them to telegraph their intentions to him, and then omitting to reply with his. Parnell, realising that Sir John Hennessy would probably declare for his enemies, arranged to have a candidate ready to oppose him, if that became necessary. Mr. Barry O'Brien, his biographer, was to be the candidate, his expenses being paid by the party. On the eve of the election Sir John declared for the Seceders, and Parnell wired to London for Mr. O'Brien, but while that gentleman was travelling to contest the constituency another candidate, Mr. Vincent Scully, who was rich and influential and willing to pay his own expenses, was chosen instead. Parnell did not hesitate to scrap Mr. O'Brien, who, however, beyond a pardonable irritation, bore him no ill-will for his rough treatment of him. On the contrary, he wrote an admirable and affectionate *Life* of Parnell. Only a man supremely gifted with command over other men could have treated his subordinates as Parnell treated Mr. O'Brien on this occasion, and retain their respect and service. "What does he expect me to do now?" Mr. O'Brien demanded when he was given the news on his arrival. "He expects you to come to Kilkenny and help Scully," was the reply, and Mr. O'Brien went.

On December 9, 1890, Parnell, accompanied by some of his followers, started from Euston for Ireland. The station was packed by a mass of English and Irish men, who greeted him with affection and fervour. Some of them seized him and carried him to his carriage, amid cries of " Cheers for the chief." It happened that Mr. T. M. Healy and his brother Maurice were travelling by the same train, and they were vigorously hissed by the crowd as they struggled to the compartment in which they were to travel. Parnell had to speak from his carriage. " I believe you will stand by me to the end," he said; and they roared back, " We will." Mr. Healy, in whom some demon seemed to live, interjected offensive personalities about Parnell, and for a moment or two there was danger of a riot; but just in time to save trouble the train, already several minutes late, steamed out of the station. When the *Ireland* brought Parnell and his friends, and Mr. Healy and his brother, to the Carlisle Pier at Kingstown, many people and two brass bands had assembled to meet " the chief," although the hour was half-past five in the morning, and daylight had not yet appeared. The small group of persons who were permitted by the police to go on to the pier were so intent on seeing Parnell that they did not observe Mr. Healy descending the gangway. He was not recognised until he had seated himself in the first of the two trains which were to carry the passengers away, and then a crowd gathered about the window and heavily groaned him. " A groan for the Chief Justice," shouted one, and the call was followed by others of a more offensive character. The police came hurrying to the compartment, and thrust the angry people away from it. They stood two deep before the window until at last the train moved out amid groans and jeers and yells of hatred and contempt.

While the crowd was occupied with Mr. Healy, Parnell and his supporters seated themselves in the second train, and

when he was recognised there was a rush to greet him. The band at the other end of the platform played "God save Ireland," while the Town Clerk of Kingstown presented an address to Mr. Parnell. At Westland Row, where he arrived at seven o'clock, a great crowd awaited him. Here, too, Mr. Healy was hooted and groaned when he was recognised. A bouquet was presented to Parnell by a lady, and when he had seated himself in his carriage the horses were unyoked, and he was drawn from Brunswick Street through the heart of Dublin to Dr. Kenny's house in Rutland Square, where he was to stay. Crowds lined the streets, and cheered him as he passed. When he had made a speech of thanks outside Dr. Kenny's door, the doctor then addressed the crowd, assuring them that their leader would do his work well. They shouted back: "We will die for him."

In the evening he was led from Rutland Square by a crowd so large that it completely blocked the streets through which it passed to the Mansion House, where the Lord Mayor of Dublin entered his carriage and drove with him to the Rotunda. Bands and torch-bearers were in front of the procession, and cheers swirled down Dawson Street, past College Green, along Westmoreland Street, and over O'Connell Bridge into O'Connell Street, and up to the doors of the Rotunda. In the Round Room itself an immovable mass of cheering men and women were packed. The enthusiasm in the street flowed into the hall, and threw the audience into a ferment of devotion. It may seem to the reader that these are extravagant terms to apply to the reception which was given to Parnell on that night, but they are bare and cold compared with those that might justly be used. Many people have described that night, but none of them have denied that the fervour with which Parnell was greeted by the Irish people was amazing.

When he rose to speak, looking thin and tired and very ill and weak, he was cheered for several minutes. The queer calmness of manner which made him irresistible to his people was never so noticeable as it was then. He was no longer the smartly-dressed man he had formerly been. He stooped slightly, and his untrimmed hair was turning grey and scanty. His pale face was paler than usual, but his eyes retained their fire. He spoke for an hour, and almost every sentence he said was cheered. He moved his people as he pleased. They shouted against his enemies. They groaned when the name of Healy was mentioned or suggested. They laughed when he desired their laughter, and became angry when he roused their rage. "I don't intend to plead to you here to-night excuses or reasons for my action, believing that you have confidence in me, and will not put me through the ordeal of excuses or reasons, but that you will take me for what you know me to be, for what you believe me to be, and for what, please God, I will prove myself to be in the face of Ireland and of my fellow-countrymen." He ended his speech as proudly as he began it. "If you have any fault to find with me, now is your time to bring it forward. Where is it? I don't pretend to be immaculate, I don't pretend that I have not had my moments of trial and of temptation, but I do claim that never in thought, in word, or deed have I been false to the trust that Irishmen have confided in me. And if I, after sixteen years of combat, can come before you to-night and can proclaim my invincible determination to persevere in this path, is it too much to ask of you that you shall strengthen me with your good-will and with your appreciation? I pledge to you my word—that word which, despite the taunts of my enemies, has never been broken—that your judgment will be vindicated, and that the cause of Ireland will win that triumph which a self-respecting nation and a self-judging nation can alone confer upon us

—the cause of that victory which your ardour and your determination to-night show me that you are determined to gain."

II

Between the hour of Mr. Parnell's arrival in Dublin and the hour of his meeting at the Rotunda he had given orders that his paper, *United Ireland*, which Mr. Matthias Bodkin, the acting editor, was conducting in the interests of the Seceders, should be brought back to its duty. Bodkin was to be expelled, and Mr. E. Leamy was to be put in his place. The man who put Bodkin out went up to him and said: "Matty, will you walk out, or would you like to be thrown out?" Matty preferred to walk out. But while Parnell was addressing the crowd in the Rotunda, Matty and his friends reseized the paper. The following morning, Thursday, December 11, Mr. Parnell, before departing from Dublin for Cork, went with some of his friends to the offices of the paper at 33, Lower Abbey Street to retake it. A crowd gathered, set afire by the fact that Parnell himself was present, and prepared to storm the offices. Parnell knocked on the door, but was not admitted. He attempted to jump over the area railings, but was restrained by his followers, some of whom jumped over in his stead. He took a crowbar from a bystander and swung it heavily on the door, which yielded, and then he rushed into the hall. There was a sound of crashing and of struggle, and then, after a few minutes, Parnell appeared at a window on the second floor, pale, save where a crimson spot glowed on each cheek, and dusty and dishevelled. He addressed the crowd. "I rely on Dublin," he said. "What Dublin says to-day Ireland will say to-morrow." Then he descended from the window and re-entered his carriage and drove off to catch his train.

III

We return to the North Kilkenny election. Sir John Pope Hennessy had now declared himself for the Seceders, and Mr. O'Brien had been instructed to appear in the constituency. He arrived there, not as the candidate, but as a supporter of the candidate. When he entered the lounge of the Victoria Hotel in Kilkenny, he found men moving about silently and on tiptoe. Stretched on chairs before the fire lay Parnell asleep. "To me," says Mr. O'Brien, "he looked like a dying man." But his sleep and night's rest did Parnell good, and in the morning he was jaunty and handsome again. He started off on his ten days' campaigning with great vigour, doing more work than any of his lieutenants, more work than any sick man should have been allowed to do. But the fight was a lost one. The Church had declared against him, and the divorced Protestant found priests at every polling-booth working against him. Mr. Healy raged about the constituency, spitting venom wherever he went on the name of "Kitty" O'Shea. He swore that he would drive Parnell into his grave or the lunatic asylum. There was no outrage on language which Mr. Healy did not commit in the North Kilkenny election. He showed then what dark, detestable things are hidden in the Celtic soul. Behind the charm and wit and amiability which the sentimentalists admire in the Southern Celts there are bitterness and cruelty and blasting hatred—all of which were fully displayed at Kilkenny by Timothy Healy. Nor did he rest there. Wherever he went he dragged the name of "Kitty" O'Shea into his discourse. At Lislea, in County Armagh, about six miles from Newry, he told his auditors that Mr. Parnell had made a new law since the previous Sunday, "and the law he had made was

that whilst they had his name upon their lips, there was one name that they must not mention at all, and that was the name of a precious personage who was more dear to Mr. Parnell than Ireland itself." A voice shouted out, "Kitty." The end of the election was that the Church and Mr. Healy defeated Parnell. Sir John Pope Hennessy received 2,527 votes to 1,362 given to Mr. Vincent Scully.

A pamphlet entitled *Under Which Flag? or, Is Parnell to be the Leader of the Irish People?* was published about this time. The author called himself "A Gutter Sparrow." Thirty-five years have passed since it was published, but even to-day, to one who has no personal knowledge of the people whom it concerns, it is nauseous stuff to read. There are unimaginable insults to Parnell on nearly every page. He is called a "putrefying political corpse," "a bad man," "a convicted adulterer," "shameless," "dishonourable," "a liar," and "a seducer of his host's wife." Its author was (and still is) generally believed to be Mr. T. M. Healy, and certainly the matter contained in the pamphlet bears a curious resemblance to the speech which Mr. Healy delivered in Committee Room 15 on the day when he demanded who should be the mistress of the Irish party. But it is a gutter version of that speech. If Mr. Healy was "A Gutter Sparrow," one can only conclude that it was the Dr. Jekyll in him who delivered the speech and the Mr. Hyde who wrote the pamphlet! . . . Parnell has been in his Glasnevin grave for thirty-four years. Mr. Healy is the Governor-General of the Irish Free State, entitled, if he chooses, to be received with royal honours. He is old now, seventy years of age, and has achieved a high position and the regard of many men, but perhaps, as he sometimes tumbles in his semi-royal bed, he remembers with remorse that he drove a great man to his death with words that should have dropped dead from his tongue with shame. If anything

can scald a man's soul, the remembrance of that shameful pamphlet must scald the soul of the Right Honourable Timothy Healy.

IV

The rest is brief. Mr. William O'Brien, who could not come either to England or Ireland because there was a warrant out for his arrest, endeavoured too late to make peace. He met Parnell in Boulogne on several occasions with other members of the party, and various proposals were made and abandoned. Parnell's life now was one of incessant activity. He negotiated with O'Brien in Boulogne. He rushed back to Ireland to speak in remote and weather-beaten places, or to take part in by-elections. He put up a candidate in North Sligo, and was defeated. He put up a candidate in Carlow, and was defeated. The clergy were consolidating hard against him. At Mass, a priest said to his congregation: "There are several Parnellites here this morning. You know what to do to them when you get outside." Another priest heard a lad cheering for Parnell, and went up to him and knocked him senseless. Songs were sung about "Kitty" O'Shea of a character that consorted ill with the reputation of the Irish for purity of mind and thought. Once, when Parnell was driving along a country road to a meeting, he saw some village louts and girls standing at the end of a *boreen*. He smiled at them as he drove by, and they shouted an offensive word after him. He did not speak. The smile left his face and his eyes gleamed, but he did not speak. The mass of the people still loved him, but the rabble were ready now to wound him. Once at Castlecomer a message was brought to him from Michael Davitt making an offer to share a platform for debate, and guaranteeing him a quiet hearing. Parnell's pride was provoked, and he replied: "Tell Mick

Davitt that I have never asked for his permission to speak where and when I pleased in Ireland, and I will not do so now." That night, as the dusk descended, a crowd, which had been inflamed by Davitt and by Dr. Tanner, a coarser sort of Healy, and a man whose name is unknown, but whose voice reminded an American reporter of " a mammoth brass foundry," began to show signs of hostility to Parnell. As he and his friends departed in the dark towards Kilkenny, stones and mud were flung at them, and some bags of lime. One of these bags burst in Parnell's face, and its contents nearly blinded him. Dr. J. Byrne Hackett, one of his supporters, found him sitting in the brake in great pain, and had him taken off to a labourer's cottage, where the eye was temporarily attended to. " But for several days afterwards the inflammatory action set up in his eyes caused him a great deal of suffering."[1]

He delivered an impressive speech in Belfast on May 22, 1891. The following morning he departed for Limerick at the other end of Ireland. He crossed the Irish Sea twice every week, and sometimes in the same week went to France. Yet he showed no signs of nervous exhaustion, for one who knew and loved him well has sent a message to the present writer to say that " within five or six weeks of his death, although he looked strange, he was as acute as ever about his business, giving the clearest directions about macadamising " a road at Avondale.

On June 25, 1891, he married Mrs. O'Shea at the office of the Registrar at Steyning, near Brighton. The defection of the *Freeman's Journal* followed on his marriage. It seemed that that journal was prepared to support him after he was found guilty of adultery, but was not prepared to support him when he married the woman with whom the adultery

[1] " Castlecomer Lime," by J. Byrne Hackett, M.D., *The Irish Weekly Independent*, October 6, 1894.

had been committed! When Parnell heard of this reverse he prepared to start a new paper, to be called *The Irish Daily Independent*, and worked on the project as earnestly as he had worked on his mining experiments. He was now forty-five years of age, worn out and ill and deserted. His horror of solitude returned to him. He became depressed and melancholy when he was away from his wife, and would almost plead with his friends, when he was in Ireland, not to leave him alone. Some of the Seceders, notably Mr. Justin McCarthy, saw him at intervals. Parnell went once to McCarthy's house to transact some business. He arrived at eleven at night, and left at half-past three in the morning, keeping his cab at the door all the time. Then he drove off to Euston to catch the mail train to Holyhead on his way to Ireland. "He was as friendly and familiar as if nothing whatever had occurred to divide us, and we smoked at intervals of work and drank whiskey and soda, and I thought it dismal, ghastly, and hideous, and I hate to have to meet him."[1]

On September 27, 1891, very ill and tired, he started from Dublin for the village of Creggs on the borders of Galway and Roscommon. On the previous day he had been examined at his own request by his friend, Dr. Kenny, and was found to be suffering from acute rheumatism and general debility. The doctor urged him to abandon his journey to Creggs, but he would not do so. A crowd, led by a torchlight procession, gathered at Athlone Station to greet him, and here he was compelled to speak to the people, although he was suffering from intense pain. As the train began to move away an old man was fatally injured, and Parnell, when he heard what had happened, exclaimed, "Good God! Good God!" and collapsed into a seat. "I have never seen him so deeply affected by anything, and he

[1] *Chief and Tribune : Parnell and Davitt*, by M. M. O'Hara, p. 324.

walked up and down the carriage for some time in deep thought; and a considerable interval elapsed before he again became himself."[1] He arrived at Roscommon at midnight, and was met by another torchlight procession. It was nearly morning before he got to bed. The next day he started for Creggs, where he delivered a halting speech, which improved, however, as he went on. The weather was terrible, and he was drenched by rain. Still he did not rest. He returned to Dublin by the night mail, where he spent the next three days working on the new paper! . . .

This was the sort of life he was leading ten days before he died.

On Wednesday, September 30, he went back to England, though Dr. Kenny urged him to stay until he was more fit to travel. "Oh, no," he said; "I shall be all right. I shall come back again next Saturday week." At Westland Row he saw two of his friends, Mr. John Kelly and Mr. John Clancy, and asked them to go down to Kingstown with him. He was nervous and weak, and shrank back from the crowd which struggled to cross the gangways on to the boat. He asked Mr. Kelly and Mr. Clancy to get a berth for him, and they took his rug and bag and went on to the boat. When they returned and told him that they had secured a fore-cabin for him he showed boyish delight, for he preferred a fore-cabin to any other. Mr. Clancy went away, and Parnell and Mr. Kelly stood on the deck chatting until it was time for the boat to depart. It was not customary for him to stay on deck, but this time he stayed until the whistle blew, and the sailors, as they passed, told each other, "There's Mr. Parnell!" As Mr. Kelly turned towards the gangway, Parnell cheerily slapped him on the back. "Well, old man," he said, "I'll be back on Saturday week for the Macroom

[1] From an interview with Mr. J. P. Quinn in *United Ireland*, October 7, 1891. Mr. Quinn accompanied Mr. Parnell to Creggs.

meeting." In London he tried to relieve his pain by taking a Turkish bath, after which he went down to Brighton. He sat before the fire that night, very tired and a little dazed, and when bedtime came he could not walk to his room without help. He slept, but not for long, and presently his talk turned to Ireland and the Irish peasants and the sufferings they had endured " during those awful years of famine." On Saturday morning he was a little better, but on Sunday he was worse, and the local doctor was sent for. That night he slept badly, and towards the morning he became feverish. All Monday " he was in much pain, afraid to move a finger because of it." He was sleepless again on Monday night, and on Tuesday morning the fever had increased. He dozed a little during the evening, and Mrs. Parnell heard him murmuring in his sleep " the Conservative party." An hour or two later he sighed and became unconscious. At midnight he died.[1]

V

A week earlier, on September 30, 1891, General Boulanger shot himself on the grave of his mistress, Madame de Bounemains, in Brussels, and the romantic public associated the one death with the other, and rumour ran round London asserting that Parnell had committed suicide. Legend, indeed, became very busy with him then. Many said and believed to the end of their days that he was alive.[2] The present writer remembers in his boyhood being told in Belfast, during the Boer War, that General De Wet was really Mr. Parnell. The cause of this belief was, first, the singular shape of the coffin in which he was carried to his grave: it was of medieval

[1] On the following day, October 7, 1891, Sir John Pope Hennessy, the victor of North Kilkenny, died.

[2] Mr. Lennox Robinson based one of his plays, *The Lost Leader*, on this legend.

shape, without shoulders, and was the sort that he had often said he desired; second, the fact that his coffin was closed down very soon after his death, and no one was permitted to see his body, not even his sister, Mrs. Dickinson. There is a purely physical explanation of this. He was in a very high fever when he died, and *had* to be closed in his coffin almost at once. Dr. Jowers, who attended him, certified the cause of death to be "rheumatic fever with hyperpyrexia, or what is popularly known as excessively high temperature and failure of the heart's action." Some of his colleagues had intended to have a cast taken of his features, but the intention could not be fulfilled because of the rapid change which had taken place in his body.

VI

Ireland was stunned by his death. A darkness fell upon Irish hearts, and a cry of sorrow broke from Irish lips. In that moment even Tim Healy was silent, though he was not silent long. One searches through old and yellowing newspapers, whose folds are thin and worn, for signs of that grief, and sees how quickly the heart of Ireland poured itself out into poems that, though they were of varying quality, were unvarying in their love.

O, but our Chief, our Love, there's no returning,
No words can make you come.
Not all our wringing hands, our useless mourning,
Our anger fierce and dumb.

They drove you to your death, through a long passion
Of agony and pain.
The cup you drank was brimmed by your own nation,
And who shall cleanse the stain?

* * * * *

Say now to Emmet and Wolfe Tone, moreover—
  Who hold their hands to you—
That never your Ireland had a better lover
  Than you your Ireland slew.

Say yet that not their names are holier keeping
  Than yours, O dear and brave,
For whom to-day your Ireland's wild with weeping,
  Her wet face on your grave,

wrote one young Irish girl, called Katharine Tynan, whose work and company had sometimes comforted Parnell. But it was an Englishman, Lionel Johnson, who wrote perhaps the most moving of all the poems that were written then:

The wail of Irish winds,
  The cry of Irish seas,
Eternal sorrow finds
  Eternal voice in these.

I cannot praise our dead,
  Whom Ireland weeps so well;
Her morning light that fled;
  Her morning star that fell.

She of the mournful eyes
  Waits, and no dark clouds break:
Waits, and her strong son lies
  Dead for her sake.

* * * * *

Her son, our brother, lies
  Dead for her sake;
But from his grave doth rise
  Her voice, that bids us wake.

Not his to hail the dawn:
  His but the herald's part.
Be ours to see withdrawn
  Night from our mother's heart.

In faith, this day we keep
Tryst by her true son's grave.
He sleeps. We cannot sleep:
She lives, he died to save.

In his own paper, *United Ireland*, from the pen, probably, of his faithful follower, Edmund Leamy, came a lament unique, perhaps, in journalism:

"But as Charles Parnell lay on his bed of death, he had one consoling thought. He knew that the true men of Ireland were with him heart and soul. He knew that the honest men of Ireland revered and honoured him. He knew that the fearless men of Ireland, who love their country and hate her foes, stood behind him, rank and file, shoulder to shoulder, heart to heart, under this October sky, ready to follow him whithersoever he led. And they to-day, with reverence, and affection, and loyalty, and deep, deep sorrow beyond and above all words or outward signs, place their wreaths upon his coffin. They drop a tear there, too; no Seceder's forced tear to please the passing sentiment; no tear to wash away a hundred insults to the dead, pale face of Ireland's chief—ah! no; but a tear of love, a tear of grief, a tear blood-red from the heart of hearts. He fell—yes, countrymen, he fell—but we are not afraid as Catholics to say this day, let his enemies revile him as they will—we are not afraid to say for him, as Lucas said for Davis: May the good God forgive him his sins, and have mercy on his soul, and reward him for what he has done and meant to do for Ireland. Farewell, our chief, our dear chief! Farewell! Farewell!"

VII

They brought him to Ireland on Sunday, October 11, 1891. He had told Mr. Kelly that he would be back on Saturday for the Macroom meeting, but he did not return until Sunday, and it was to Glasnevin he went. At a quarter-past twelve on Saturday afternoon his body was taken from

his house in Walsingham Terrace, Brighton, where his wife was prostrate with grief, and placed in an open car. Drenching rain fell as the funeral procession moved away on its three-mile journey to the railway station, but crowds collected on the road and raised their hats as the body went by. The coffin, on being put into the train, was enclosed in a large deal case to protect it from damage, and then the first part of the journey home began. At Clapham Junction and at Willesden Junction Irishmen and women gathered to respect the dead. The mourning carriages were attached to the Irish mail at Willesden, and the chief was carried to Holyhead and put on the mail boat, where Irishmen guarded his coffin across the Irish Sea. A raw, wet morning greeted his return, but when the coffin reached Westland Row, dark and wet and early though the hour was, thousands of men and women were waiting for him. The coffin was taken from the deal case, which was thrown aside, but, as it fell, crowds seized it and tore it into fragments that they might have even that relic of him. A band played a *caoine*, and as the wailing sound rose and fell, thousands of people fell in behind the procession and walked, in step to the *caoine*, to the City Hall, where the body was to lie in state. *Ululu! Ululu!* was the sound.

> *Ululu! Ululu!* wail for the dead.
> Green grows the grass of Fingal on his head;
> And spring flowers blossom ere elsewhere appearing,
> And shamrocks grow thick on the martyr of Erin.
> *Ululu! Ululu!* soft fall the dew
> On the feet and the head of the martyr and true.

They let him pause for a moment before the old Parliament House in College Green, though the fog and the rain thickly continued, and then, with the wailing of the band in their ears, they carried him to the City Hall, where they laid him down under the shadow of O'Connell's statue. Above his

head were two tattered flags which his ancestors had carried in the Irish Volunteer movement in 1779. He lay there, in the black-draped hall, until two o'clock in the afternoon. Thirty thousand persons had passed before his coffin while he was lying in state, and the sound of their sobbing and murmured prayers was the only sound heard in that hall that day. At two o'clock the funeral procession began. Drenching rain still fell, but no one remembered the rain. Two thousand Gaels, each carrying a *caman* draped with black, appeared in a formation of six abreast, and made a pathway through the thick, swaying crowd. There was noise and confusion until an uncovered man appeared on the high steps of the balcony and cried out, " Hush ! Hush !" and instantly there was deep silence and heads were uncovered, and what before was a black, indistinguishable mass became a sea of white, anxious, and sorrowful faces. The body was brought out. The Gaels raised their *camans* in salutation, and a deep wail rose from the assembled Irish. At a quarter-past two, when all was ready, the procession moved off. Forty bands, with muffled drums, played Chopin's *Funeral March* or *Adestes Fideles* along the road to Glasnevin. It was nearly half-past six when at last, in the wet dusk, he was buried. A hundred and fifty thousand men and women had walked with him to his grave, a hundred and fifty thousand men and women had trudged though the drenching rain to bid farewell to their only chief. " Farewell, our chief, our dear chief ! Farewell ! Farewell !"

CHAPTER XII

THE END OF AVONDALE

I

WHAT remains is a tale of continuing calamity. Sometimes, when an honourable family is about to die, it sends out one final flash of its ancient flame and then expires. So it was with Parnell. He was the last flare of brightness from the family of the Congleton mercer, and he was the last gentleman in Ireland to make a gesture towards generous government. His class stood aloof from him, and left him to depend for his following on Celtic men of peasant breed, who, though they had talent and a sort of undiscerning courage, had not got decision or pride or the high resolution of those who rule because it is right that they should rule, but only the resolution of those who rule because they have been wronged. If there had been a body of gentlemen behind Parnell, the blow which struck him would not have felled him, for they would not have allowed themselves to be daunted by Mr. Gladstone or cowed by Dissenting Liberals. But he had no such following. The Irish gentlemen were hunting foxes or playing at pretty soldiers or meanly living abroad on rents wrung by their agents from the blood and sweat and pain of their tenants. They denied their duty, and were destroyed. Nor will anyone deny that their destruction was deserved. That brilliant flame that filled the Irish sky for too short a time seemed for a while to be a light by which Ireland would be illuminated for ever, but because there was no pride and no fidelity in those who should have held the torch aloft, the flame was quenched and the darkness was deepened. There is a testing time in the life of nations, as there is in the life of individual men, and when that time came to Ireland the Irish failed to pass it. There was vouchsafed to them a man

who had the power to lead, but his lieutenants betrayed him, and they were lost in the wilderness, where they still remain.

II

When Parnell died, his family almost perished. His house was in ruins. Mortgages and debt ate up Avondale. John Howard Parnell, now heir to the property, came hurrying home from his peach-farm in Alabama, and found his sister, Emily Dickinson, almost without food, and the workmen on the estate without wages. A paralysis seemed to have fallen on them, and they stood about, dumbly waiting for something to happen. There was no money for her or for them. John Parnell ordered a tree to be cut down and sold, and with the money for which it was bought the men were paid. Then another tree was felled, and yet another and another, until at last the woods about Avondale were nearly all down. The Parnells had been proud of their trees, but now they had no pride left. Old Mrs. Parnell, now nearly eighty, returned from Bordenstown, unable, it seemed, to realise that the junketings could not be continued. Sixty-two years had passed since she had first arrived at Avondale, a pretty girl not yet eighteen, and of the twelve children she had conceived in that house, seven were dead. She had seen great changes, but was herself unchanged. She was still " flighty," as the peasants about Rathdrum had called her, still clamouring for entertainment and indifferent to expense, still ready to presume upon her sex and wound the feelings of her English guests, still almost mechanically murmuring malign phrases whenever she heard the word " England." Yet there was something game about her, something that showed she was the mother of her son. A year before she returned to Ireland she had travelled from Philadelphia to Chicago, where Irish delegates were to address a great crowd of divided Irishmen.

These delegates, converging on Chicago from various parts of America, had read Parnell's manifesto in Cincinnati with disapproval. Immediately, with one exception, they decided that they could not follow Parnell any longer, and when they went to Chicago they did so with the intention of announcing this decision to their countrymen there assembled. But when they arrived in the hall and heard how fierce were the passions which the split had provoked, they resolved not to speak of it, lest a fight should follow. They mounted the platform, and there, facing them in the front row, was Mrs. Parnell, come, as they realised, to avenge her son if they should speak against him. She was nearly eighty years of age, an old woman with a perfectly oval face, greenish-white in colour, and with eyes that had flickering fires in them, just as her son's had. They did not speak to her, nor did she speak to them, but they knew that if they said one word, however reasonable it might be, against their chief, she would turn that mass of passionate men and women into a heap of flames.

When Mrs. Parnell had been at Avondale for two years, Emily Dickinson, hostess now for her brother John, as she had formerly been for her brother Charles, resolved to recapture some of the ancient glory of her home before the order of the court was obeyed and the house was sold. She gave a dinner-party to thirty guests, and placed the old lady at the head of the table, where she had sat as a bride. The talk turned on the war, now imminent, with the Transvaal, and Mrs. Parnell held her guests while she told them what she thought of England and the English. All the phrases that had tumbled off her tongue in sixty-four years, for she was now almost eighty-two, came tumbling off it again. The English were this, the English were that, the English were the other! . . . She was, of course, a pro-Boer. She would have been pro-anything that was anti-English. If one had

gone to her while she slept, and had whispered " England " in her ear, she would have babbled back bitterness without opening her eyes ! . . . After dinner, more guests arrived, and there was dancing, interrupted by a supper at which her health was drunk, until two or three in the morning. Then the guests departed into the storm which had sprung up while they danced, and old Mrs. Parnell went to bed. In the morning she rose at eight o'clock, and, wrapping her dressing-gown about her, sat down in front of the bedroom fire. The storm had not abated and she felt cold, so her daughter Emily piled logs on the fire and made it roar up the chimney. Then she returned to her room to finish dressing, leaving her mother at her breakfast. Ten minutes later she heard a frightful shriek, and rushing to Mrs. Parnell's room, found her mother in flames ! . . . The whole room seemed to be on fire. The curtains and the furniture were ablaze, and in a little while Avondale would have perished by fire. But the fire was extinguished, and Mrs. Parnell, terribly burnt, was laid on her bed while her burns were soothed with oil. She suffered great pain until the evening, when it seemed to subside a little, and she talked for a while to her granddaughter, a Delia as she was, but did not speak of the fire or of how it was caused. Then the pain returned, and at five o'clock on the next afternoon she died. They buried her at Glasnevin by her son's side.

III

The slight alleviation of John Parnell's fortune did not last. An attempt was made by John Redmond to buy the house for the Irish people. He collected money for that purpose, and proposed that John Parnell should occupy the house until his death, when it should become a national memorial to the chief. But John Parnell thought that the

house should remain the property of the Parnells, and would not consent to Redmond's proposal, and the plan was not completed. Eventually Avondale was sold to a Dublin butcher, called Boylan, for £8,000. On his death it was bought, at the instance of Sir Horace Plunkett, by the Board of Agriculture for £10,000 and converted into a school of forestry. There are no Parnells now at Avondale, except in the churchyard of Rathdrum, nor are there any at Aughavannagh, which was sold to John Redmond. Hardly any Parnells from Avondale are left; there are only three who bear the name, and these will be the last of their line. All of Parnell's brothers and sisters are dead, but some of their children survive. Of Parnell's three children by Mrs. O'Shea, one, as we have noted, died at the age of nine weeks; the second lived to marry a doctor of Irish origin, but died in childbirth with her baby; and the third survives. The great house and its great tradition are lost.

One gathers up the poor records and sets them down. Anna Parnell, who had rejected her brother from her love when he suppressed her League, fell into an epilepsy when she heard of his death, and thereafter became unaccountable. Several times she changed her name—once she called herself Cecilia Garland—and at last, under the name of Cerisa Palmer, she went to live in Ilfracombe, where her eccentricities of dress and manner made her a conspicuous figure. She could swim well, though she always swam in an odd way, standing upright in the water, and the attendant at the Tunnel Baths, where she went to swim on September 20, 1911, was not seriously perturbed when she went over the wall into the rough water outside the baths, although she had never been over it before. He warned her to be careful, and she shouted back to him "All right!" and swam off. What happened next is obscure. He saw that she was in trouble, and tried to get her ashore, but was not quickly able to do so. She

was still breathing when she was brought to land, but did not recover consciousness, although a doctor tried for an hour to resuscitate her. And so she died. She was buried at the parish church without a mourner, for no member of her family went to her burial. Seven years later her sister Emily, who had married a second husband, Captain Cuthbert Ricketts, arrived in Dublin from Wales on May 12, 1918, and stayed for a night in an hotel. On the following day she drove to the South Dublin Workhouse and claimed admission on the ground of destitution. She was admitted to the infirmary, where she died on May 18. Her mind had become unhinged. She was buried at Rathdrum, by the church where she was baptised, near the house where she was born.

IV

Poverty and oblivion and mental distress make up the final pages of the story. In a happier land, with a happier people, Parnell might have lived to achieve even greater distinction than he did. Some say that he must have become insane, if, indeed, he was not already insane, but one has to remember that he was not so fortunately circumstanced as other leaders. He had to fight for a people who were not his people against a people who were. He had to endure mental and physical strain beyond his strength. The last months of his life were passed in agony. He had risen from obscurity to a high position, and had suddenly been thrown from that position because his followers were not proud and could not be faithful. Sick and very tired, he set out to reconquer his country, and might, with health and better following, have won a victory. But he had to contend with illness, and weak nerves, and a sense of failure, and a passionate

woman, and unfaithful friends, and a climate that robbed him of what health he had. Ireland echoed with the taunts of Tim Healy. Wherever Parnell went, the Bantry peasant's voice could be heard shrieking insults at "Kitty O'Shea," which lacerated Parnell as nothing else in this world could lacerate him. And so this imperious man fell, not before the English wolves, but before the wolves of Ireland. There was a decent silence among the Seceders when he died, but Healy broke it. One has tried to keep respect for this man, and to remember what there is to say in his behalf, but there are some men who deny themselves all respect, and it seemed then that Timothy Healy was one of them. Exactly three weeks after Parnell was buried in Glasnevin he went to Longford, and there, in a public speech, referred to the unhappy widow in Brighton as "a convicted British prostitute." He had used the foul and preposterous phrase once before when Parnell was alive, but the rancour of the Celtic peasant could not be dispersed by death, and he used it again. One does not try to understand this singular nature, in which the love and hatred, the devotion and cruelty of the Celt seem to be symbolised. It is enough that in that time of agony, while a woman and a nation were in deep distress, he was found ready to spit on their sorrow. Need we be surprised that one young man could not endure this infamy? Parnell was dead, but he had left a nephew, son to the beautiful Sophia who resembled him, and this young man resolved that Healy should not go unpunished. He was twenty-three years of age, a student of engineering at Trinity College, quiet in his ways and undemonstrative. On Monday evening he read in the newspapers what had been said at Longford on Sunday, and on Tuesday afternoon, November 4, 1891, he went to the Four Courts and horsewhipped Healy in the passage leading from the library to the coffee-room. His name was Alfred Tudor MacDermott, and he looked like his

dead uncle. It must have seemed to Healy then that Parnell himself had come out of the grave to chastise him for his tongue's abuse. "Bravo!" Patrick O'Brien and William Redmond, two Parnellite M.P.'s, telegraphed to young MacDermott. "Bravo! We congratulate you on having whipped that cowardly cur who attacked a defenceless, sorrowing woman."

V

His lieutenants fought among themselves for the succession to his throne, but though they had brains and wit and eloquence, they had not his power of swift decision nor his sure judgment nor his strange ability to seize upon the essential fact. "And now?" wrote Robert Buchanan:

> And now? The things which fear'd his face
> Fight for the lion's skin.
>
> What one of these shall put it on?
> *Thou*, weakest of the weak,
> Who, when thy Lord lay woebegone,
> First kiss'd, then smote, his cheek?
> Or *thou*, who mock'd him in his fall
> With foul and impious jest?
> Or thou, the basest of them all,
> Who gnaw'd the bleeding breast?
>
> Jackals and cowards, mourn elsewhere!
> Not near the mighty Dead!
> Your breath pollutes the holy air
> Around a martyr's bed.
> Go! fatten with the Scribes and Priests
> Who led your foul array,
> Or crouch with all the timorous beasts
> Who follow'd him for prey!

There was no unity among them, for they had not his power to make unity, nor is there unity now. He was a

leader, born to rule, and they were followers born to serve. A chief had been born among them, but they abandoned him for a fault that was immeasurably smaller than crimes they had publicly applauded. We have lived to see Ireland governed by gunmen. We have lived to see the assembled priests and Bishops, aware of their impotence through their lack of moral courage, urging the Irish people not to commit *unauthorised* murders. We have lived to see a mitred ecclesiastic advising his flock not to murder a man until he is in a state of grace! . . . And these people and these priests, making heroes of murderers, damned and destroyed the only man who could keep them in unity and order because he loved a woman well enough to break the law for her sake. They yapped at his heels as he staggered, sick and tired, along the wet and windy Irish roads, and when he died they shouted: "Now the dictator is dead and the people shall rule!" But we may doubt whether the Irish, to whom terror and intimidation and corrupt practice and mean bargaining are the instruments of government, are yet ready for democracy or for any rule than that of stern dictation. They have still two centuries of time to catch up, and while they are on the road they must be led by an unquestioned chief. Parnell was the corner-stone of the Irish arch. When he fell, it fell. In an ancient document among the State Papers it is written that "there is no land in the world of so long-continued war within himself, ne of so great shedding of Christian blood, ne of so great robbing, spoiling, praying, and burning, ne of so great wrongful extortion continually as Ireland." And as it was five hundred years ago, so it is now, and so it will remain until another chieftain comes, as Parnell came, and beats the Irish into a unity that will endure.

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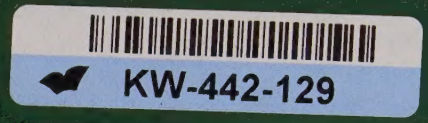
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